



**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Ely Field Office
Ely, Nevada**

July 2005



Draft – Executive Summary Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement for the Ely District



COOPERATING AGENCIES:

Duckwater Shoshone Tribe
Ely Shoshone Tribe
Great Basin National Park
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Lincoln County
Moapa Band of Paiutes
Nellis Air Force Base

Nevada Division of Minerals
Nevada Division of Transportation
Nevada Department of Wildlife
Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
Nye County
White Pine County
Yomba Shoshone Tribe

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BLM Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM/EL/PL-05/019+1610

Public Disclosure Notice: Comments, including the names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Bureau of Land Management office address listed on the front cover of this document, during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment(s). Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law and recent court decisions. All submissions from organizations, businesses, or individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**ELY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS****Q – What is the Great Basin Restoration Initiative?**

A – The Great Basin Restoration Initiative is a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) program in 5 western states including Nevada to restore the landscape (including watersheds and vegetation) within the Great Basin geographical area to a healthy and resilient condition. A watershed is a topographic area where water drains to a common river, stream, water body, or closed basin.

Q – Why do the Great Basin landscapes need to be restored?

A – There is a critical need to restore and maintain ecological diversity and resiliency within major portions of the Great Basin. The vegetative communities of the Great Basin have changed substantially over the past 150 years. Activities, such as livestock grazing, recreation, forest and woodland management, fire management, mineral exploration and mining, off-highway vehicle use, and the inadvertent introduction of noxious weeds and exotic invasive species have contributed to the change of vegetative conditions. These changes have led, in many instances, to steadily increasing fuel loads; increased fire intensity, size, and frequency; subsequent loss of soil productivity and vegetative diversity; and deterioration of watersheds (i.e., soil erosion and reduced water quantity and quality).

Q – What would happen if no action is taken to restore landscapes within the Ely District?

A – The conditions described in the previous question would continue, and there would be an increasing potential for further degradation, particularly more intense fires and further expansion of invasive species. The Ely Field Office believes it has the responsibility to begin landscape restoration as soon as possible in order to provide options for future generations by maintaining ecological health of the landscapes in the District. Allowing the current degradation to continue is unacceptable.

Q – How will the Ely Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) help restore Great Basin landscapes?

A – The Ely RMP/EIS will provide programmatic direction for landscape restoration on a watershed basis. In the past, project proposals would have been developed and implemented based upon boundaries of livestock grazing allotments. The Ely RMP/EIS will implement a policy change that directs BLM to plan and implement decisions based on watershed boundaries. Resources and resource uses will be managed to restore or maintain ecological health. Certain resource management changes and active treatments may need to be implemented, in portions of watersheds, to accomplish this objective.

Q – What is an RMP?

A – An RMP is a land use plan that prescribes broad, multiple-use guidance for managing public lands administered by the BLM.

Q – What is an EIS?

A – An EIS, required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), is a document that ensures that potential impacts of proposed management decisions are analyzed and described. The EIS process also provides numerous opportunities for public participation and input into the process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Q – Why prepare an Ely RMP/EIS?

A – Comprehensive evaluations of the existing land use plans for the three planning areas within the Ely District in 2001 and 2002 indicated a need for revisions to provide for appropriate management of all BLM programs District-wide. The RMP/EIS also is needed to facilitate implementation of the Great Basin Restoration Initiative.

Q – What public lands are covered by the Ely RMP/EIS?

A – The Ely RMP/EIS covers the approximately 11.4 million acres of public lands located in Lincoln, White Pine, and a small portion of Nye county in east-central Nevada administered by the BLM Ely Field Office.

Q – What activities/resources are addressed in the Ely RMP/EIS?

A – The Ely RMP/EIS is a comprehensive document that addresses all activities and resources on the 11.4 million acres administered by the BLM Ely Field Office.

Q – How will projects designed to restore Great Basin landscapes be derived?

A – The Ely RMP/EIS will provide management direction to plan and implement decisions based on watershed boundaries. In the future, watershed analyses will be performed to determine if Resource Advisory Council standards are being met within a watershed. If standards are being met, a restoration plan will propose projects and resource uses designed to maintain the condition of the watershed. If standards are not being met, the restoration plan will propose projects and resource uses designed to improve the condition of the watershed.

Q – What are Resource Advisory Council Standards?

A – Resource Advisory Council Standards are expressions of the physical and biological condition or degree of function necessary to sustain healthy rangeland ecosystems. Standards that address the physical components of rangeland ecological systems focus on the roles and interactions of geology and landform, soil, climate, and water as they govern watershed function and soil stability. The biological components addressed in the standards focus on the roles and interactions of plants, animals, and microbes (producers, consumers, and decomposers), and their habitats in the ecological system. The biological component of rangeland ecological systems is supported by physical function of the system, and it is recognized that biological activity also influences and supports many of the physical functions of the ecological system.

Q – How long will it take to restore the Great Basin?

A – It will take decades to restore the vegetation within the entire Great Basin. In fact, it will take much longer than the life of this RMP to restore the vegetation within the portion of the Great Basin covered by this land use plan. However, in the short term, the vegetation in all or portions of some high priority watersheds will be restored as restoration projects and revised resource management is implemented.

Q – How much is it going to cost taxpayers to restore the Great Basin?

A – The cost of restoring the vegetation within the entire Great Basin is unknown. This RMP provides some cost estimates of restoration projects that would lead toward restoration of vegetation within the portion of

the Great Basin administered by the Ely Field Office. However, as these projects would continue well into the future, the long-term cost is unknown.

Q – How will we know when landscapes within the Great Basin are restored?

A – Restoration is considered to have occurred when vegetation is comprised primarily of those plants expected to live within a given portion of a watershed based upon its soil potential. The plants also are of varying ages and sizes and are resilient to natural disturbance. Over time, more and more maintenance projects will be proposed and implemented instead of restoration projects. Fewer and fewer noxious and invasive species will exist.

Q – What are State and Transition Models?

A – State and Transition Models describe the variety of vegetation communities or states that can occupy an individual ecological site based on soil potential of an area, the environmental factors that result in continuous or reversible changes over time within a state, and the environmental factors that produce discontinuous or nonreversible changes or transitions between states on a given site.

Q – How will State and Transition Models be used to make management decisions?

A – State and Transition Models will be used along with scientific knowledge of plants and soils to propose projects designed to restore Great Basin landscapes.

Q – Is there support outside the BLM to restore the Great Basin?

A – Yes. The Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition, other organizations, and private individuals fully support the implementation of the Great Basin Restoration Initiative. The Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition is a community-based partnership of approximately 90 entities representing agriculture, conservation, cultural, and environmental interests; private enterprise; and the broader general public. The Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition's mission is to restore the Great Basin's dynamic and diverse landscapes in eastern Nevada through collaborative efforts for present and future generations.

Q – Are other federal, state, and local agencies cooperating with the BLM to prepare the Ely RMP/EIS?

A – There are 14 Cooperating Agencies helping to develop the RMP/EIS: Lincoln, White Pine, and Nye Counties; Duckwater Shoshone Tribe, Ely Shoshone Tribe, Yomba Shoshone Tribe, and the Moapa Band of Paiutes; Nevada Departments of Transportation and Wildlife; Nevada Division of Minerals; Nevada State Historic Preservation Office; Great Basin National Park; Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest; and Nellis Air Force Base.

Q – How are actions in the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 covered within the Ely RMP/EIS?

A – Actions in the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 constitute Management Actions Common to All Alternatives. Chapter 3.0 – Affected Environment describes and maps the following areas within Lincoln County: 14 areas of designated wilderness; two 0.5-mile-wide utility corridors; and approximately 90,000 acres of land available for disposal. Upon signing of the Record of Decision for the RMP, these areas would be withdrawn from all actions under the land laws.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Q – How does the Ely RMP/EIS propose to manage sagebrush to benefit sage grouse and other sagebrush obligate species?

A – Sagebrush vegetation communities within the Ely District are extremely important for watershed health, wildlife habitat, and public uses. The BLM would implement the National Sage-grouse Strategy and the Western Association of Wildlife Agencies Sage Grouse Guidelines. It also would implement projects to improve the condition of sagebrush communities throughout the District at several times the current rate. These projects would include extensive removal or thinning of pinyon and juniper within sagebrush habitats. Approximately 2.5 million acres that are in desired states would be maintained, and 3.1 million acres that are not in desired states would be actively treated. These actions would improve the habitat of sage grouse and other sagebrush obligate species and reverse the downward trend of their habitat.

Q – How does the Ely RMP/EIS propose to manage wild horses?

A – Wild horses would be managed to emphasize animal quality and health over animal quantity. Horse herds should be able to survive drought conditions. Six herd management areas covering about 3.6 million acres would be established. This represents about 67 percent of the land on which they currently exist. The 1,760,000 acres eliminated from wild horse use are lands that do not contain habitat requirement necessary to support long-term viable wild horse populations.

Q – How many wild horses does it take to have a viable wild horse population?

A – A viable wild horse population consists of at least fifty breeding adults.

Q – How many acres of land are available for disposal?

A – About 23,358 acres in White Pine County and about 320 acres in Nye County would be available for disposal. Up to 90,000 acres in Lincoln County would be available for disposal under the Lincoln County Conservation, Development, and Recreation Act, of which 71,999 acres are identified in this RMP. Therefore, there are a total of about 95,677 acres identified as available for disposal. However, the actual number of acres that may be disposed of will depend on the demand for land by parties outside BLM and the potential impacts of the disposal.

Q – How does the Ely RMP/EIS propose to manage off-highway vehicle use?

A – Approximately 9,836,000 acres (86 percent) of the Ely District is currently open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use. Off-highway vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and trails on about 10,338,000 acres. About 1,062,000 acres would be closed to off-highway vehicles. These acres consist of designated wilderness and wilderness study areas. No acres would be entirely open to vehicle use without limitations.

Q – How many acres does the Ely RMP/EIS propose to be available for livestock grazing?

A – Initially, about 11,171,000 acres (3,000 acres less than current) would be available for livestock grazing, subject to management objectives and modification associated with land disposal actions. Further modification of acres available to livestock grazing could be made as watershed analyses are performed and actions implemented.

Q – Will the RMP/EIS restrict mineral exploration and development?

A – Yes, the RMP/EIS proposes restrictions on mineral exploration and development but this occurs on less than 16 percent of the planning area. Over 9.6 million acres (84 percent of the planning area) would be available for mineral exploration and development.

Q – What are Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)?

A – ACECs are places within BLM-administered lands where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values; fish and wildlife resources; or other natural systems or processes; or to protect life and provide safety from natural hazards.

Q – How many ACECs are proposed?

A – Three existing ACECs would be retained and 18 additional ACECs are proposed for designation. Ten of the 18 new ACECs have existing special designations, so there are only 8 newly designated areas. The 21 ACECs total about 351,400 acres (about 3 percent of the planning area).

Q – Can this RMP be used to promote economic development in rural areas?

A – Some portions of the RMP could be used to promote economic development in rural areas. As BLM-administered lands are offered for disposal and transferred into private hands, it is reasonable to assume that economic development would follow. Also, as BLM implements large-scale restoration projects, it also seems logical that direct economic benefit would accrue to some contractors, and spin-off economic benefit would accrue to the communities within the Ely District.

Q – Will there be more restrictions of the public's use of public lands?

A – As the population of east-central Nevada grows, there are additional stresses placed on the public lands within the planning area from visitation and use. Some additional restrictions may be necessary to protect resources.

Q – How can I participate in preparation of the Ely RMP/EIS?

A – Copies of the Draft RMP/EIS have been distributed to known interested parties. Public meetings will be held in the communities of Ely, Caliente, Mesquite, Las Vegas, Reno, and Tonopah. These meetings provide the public with a chance to provide comments on the Draft RMP/EIS. Dates and times for the meetings will be posted at <http://elyrmp.ensr.com>. Dates and times also will be listed in local newspapers and announced on local radio stations.

You also can provide written comments via U.S. mail or email. You can send your remarks to: Bureau of Land Management, Gene Drais, RMP Project Manager, HC 33 Box 33500, Ely, NV 89301-9408, or submit them to Gene Drais at elyrmp@blm.gov. Either way, please state whether you wish to be included on future mailing lists and if you would like to receive a copy of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

Q – How will I know that my comments have been considered in this planning process?

A – Section 5.1.1 of Chapter 5.0 of the Draft RMP/EIS explains the Scoping Process and how comments received during that period were used. The Proposed RMP and Final EIS will list the names of those who commented on the Draft RMP/EIS. It also will consolidate and summarize the comments received. Further,

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

changes made to the Proposed RMP based on comments will be highlighted so readers can readily tell how their thoughts were incorporated.

Q – What is the next step in the RMP planning process?

A – The Proposed RMP/Final EIS, which incorporates comments on this Draft RMP/EIS, will be the next document issued for public review. There will be a 30-day public protest period regarding the Proposed RMP and Final EIS. An approved RMP and Record of Decision will be issued upon resolution of protests.

Q – When will decisions be made?

A – Decisions are made when the Record of Decision is signed by the Nevada State Director. This is expected to take place in calendar year 2006.

Q – What do I need to do to protect my right to protest the final decision(s) if I am dissatisfied?

A – To develop protest rights on a land use plan, an affected party must show they have participated in the process.

Q – Whom do I contact to learn more about the Ely RMP/EIS?

A – You can learn more on the Internet at a web site established to provide the public with up-to-date information about the Ely RMP/EIS. The address is: <http://elyrmp.ensr.com>. Also, the BLM will prepare bulletins to keep the public updated on the status of the RMP/EIS. Access <http://elyrmp.ensr.com> to read the bulletins. You also can contact BLM RMP Project Manager Gene Drais at (775) 289-1880 or on-line at elyrmp@blm.gov.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The BLM has prepared this Draft RMP and EIS to provide programmatic and implementable direction for management of public lands within the Ely District and to analyze the environmental effects resulting from implementing the alternatives addressed in this Draft RMP/EIS.

The planning area for the Ely District RMP/EIS consists of public lands in White Pine and Lincoln counties and a portion of Nye County in east-central Nevada (see **Map 1**). The District measures approximately 230 miles (north-south) by 115 miles (east-west). The Ely District was previously subdivided into three resource areas (Egan, Schell, and Caliente) but is now managed as a single administrative unit (see **Map 2**). The Ely Field Office manages approximately 11.4 million acres of public lands out of the approximately 13.9 million acres within the boundaries of the District.

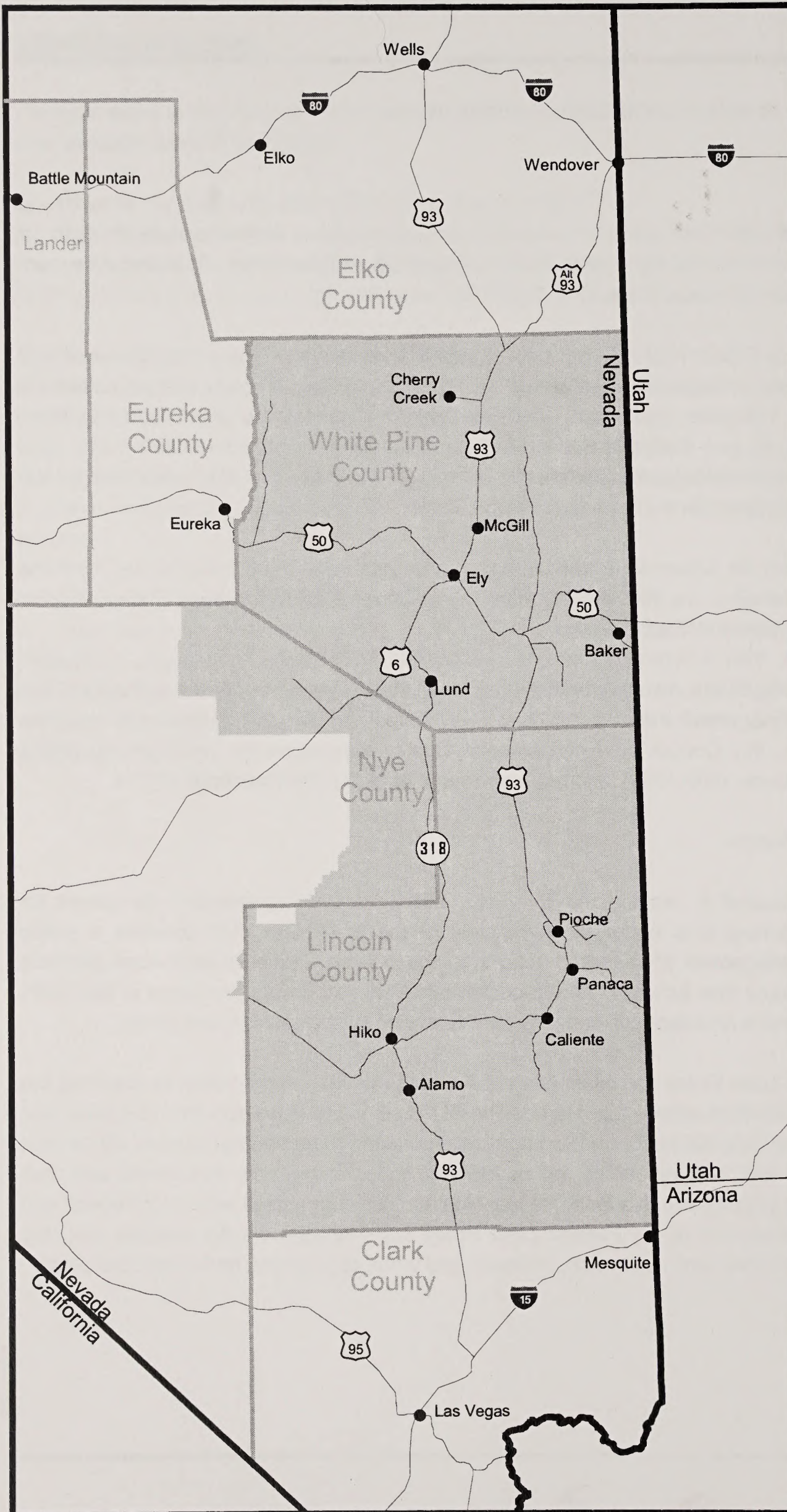
Principal communities within or adjacent to the planning area that would be affected by resource management direction contained in the RMP/EIS include Cherry Creek, McGill, Ely, Lund, Baker, Pioche, Panaca, Caliente, Hiko, Alamo, and Mesquite.

The RMP was prepared using BLM's planning regulations and guidance issued under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. An EIS is incorporated into this document to meet the requirements of the NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500-1508), and requirements of BLM's NEPA Handbook 1790-1.

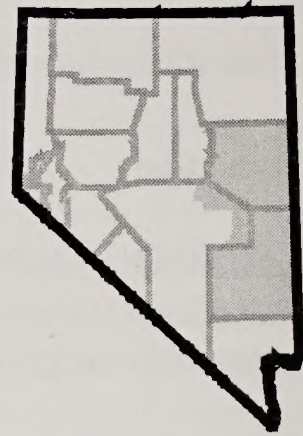
Purpose of and Need for Action

This RMP/EIS is being prepared to provide the Ely Field Office with a comprehensive framework for managing lands in the planning area under the jurisdiction of the BLM. The RMP provides a public document that specifies management policies and actions on these lands. Implementation-level planning and site-specific projects would then be completed in conformance with the broad provisions of the RMP. The RMP is needed to provide a land use plan consistent with evolving law, regulation, and policy.

Section 102 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act presents the overall policy for planning the use of resources that occur on BLM-administered lands. The BLM is required to prepare land use plans that serve as the basis for all activities that occur on BLM-administered lands. "The national interest will be best realized if the public lands and their resources are periodically and systematically inventoried and their present and future use is projected through a land use planning process coordinated with other Federal and State planning efforts." Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires that "the Secretary shall, with public involvement ... develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land use plans."



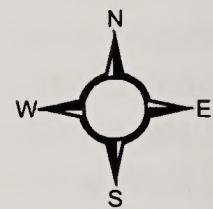
Regional View



100 0 100 200 Miles

Legend

- State Boundary
- County Boundary
- Planning Area
- Federal & State Roads
- Towns and Cities



0 20 40 Miles

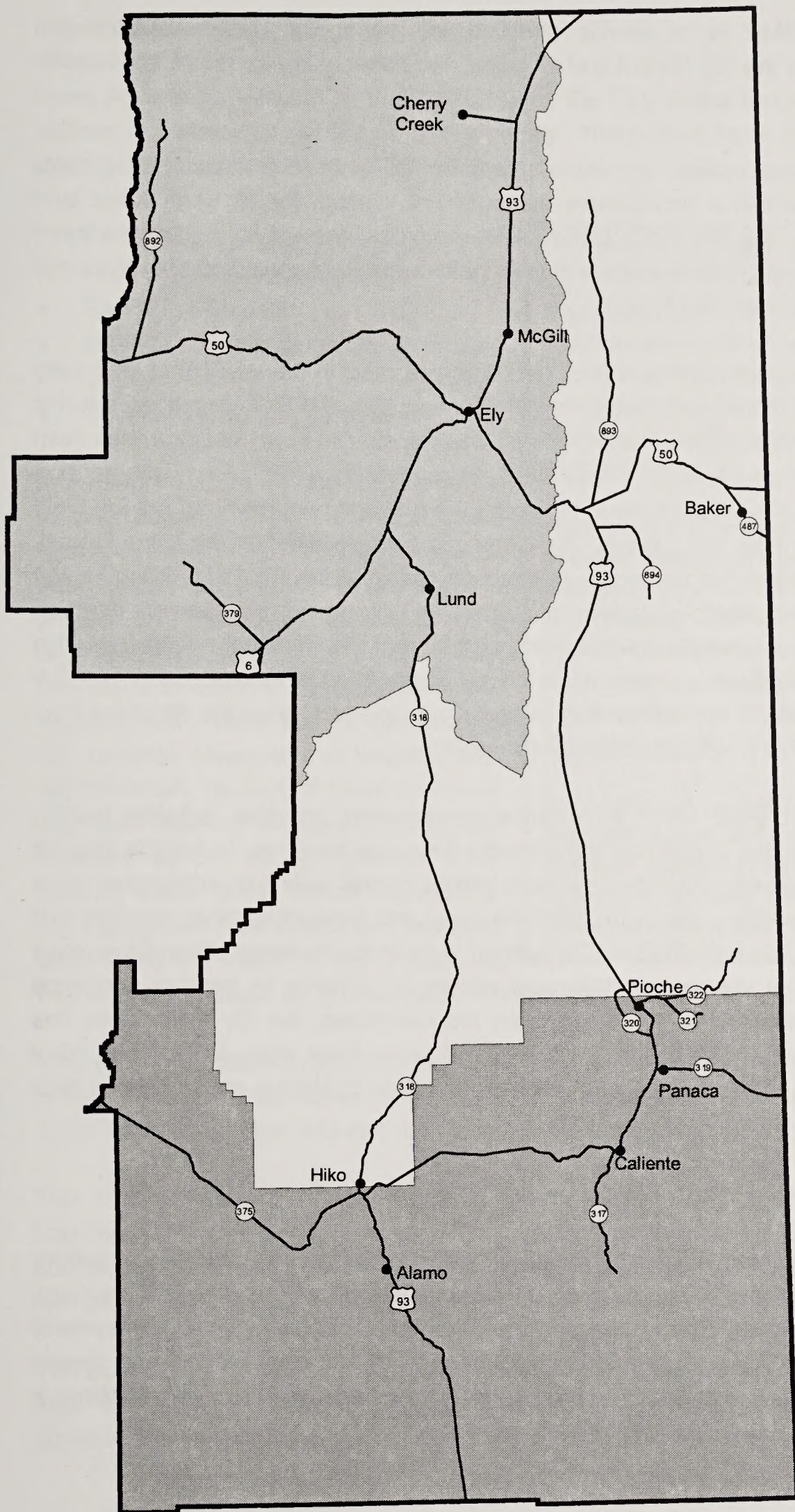


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BLM Ely District RMP/EIS

Map 1

Planning Area for the
Ely District RMP



Legend

Planning Area

• Cities and Towns

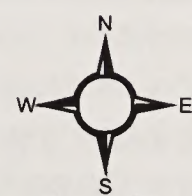
Federal & State Roads

Resource Areas

Egan

Schell

Caliente



0 9 18 27 Miles



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BLM Ely District RMP/EIS

Map 2

**Boundaries of the
Previous Administrative
Sub-units**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the revised Ely RMP is to provide direction for management of renewable and nonrenewable resources found within the Ely District and to guide decision-making for future site-specific actions.

The need for the action is to consolidate, update, and establish appropriate goals, objectives, management actions, priorities, and procedures, within a multiple-use management context, for all BLM public land resource programs administered by the Ely Field Office. This action is needed to update resource management direction to allow Ely Field Office managers to meet nationwide BLM goals and objectives and for their actions to be consistent with current BLM policy.

Across the country, the first generation of BLM land use plans was prepared in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Within the Ely District, one RMP and one Management Framework Plan (MFP) were prepared in this timeframe. In 1996, management of the Caliente Resource Area was transferred from the Las Vegas Field Office to the Ely Field Office. The Caliente Resource Area also was covered by a MFP. Even with periodic amendments, these three 15- to 20-year-old plans no longer meet the management needs of the Ely Field Office. Thus, the BLM is revising the three existing land use plans into a single RMP for the entire District. This combined plan is expected to serve the management direction needs of the Ely Field Office for the foreseeable future. The final Ely District RMP would remain in effect as long as the management direction contained in the Plan is valid in light of scientific understanding and current management needs. The Plan would be updated and amended periodically to maintain its effectiveness as long as practical. When the Plan reaches the end of its effective life, a new plan would be prepared. However, since the life of the Plan is dependent on many variables, it is not possible to estimate its duration.

The revised RMP will direct the Ely Field Office in resource management activities including leasing minerals such as oil and gas; construction of electrical transmission lines, gas pipelines, and roads; grazing management; recreation and outfitting; preserving and restoring wildlife habitat; selling or exchanging lands for the benefit of local communities; military use of the planning area; and conducting other activities that require land use planning decisions. The new RMP also is needed to facilitate implementation of the Great Basin Restoration Initiative, a regional initiative to implement actions to maintain or improve ecological health at the landscape scale. To address these management responsibilities, the Ely Field Office has undertaken a planning effort that emphasizes a collaborative approach where local, state, federal, and Tribal governments; the public; local user groups; and industry work with the BLM to identify appropriate multiple uses of the public lands.

Ely Field Office Vision of the Future

The Ely Field Office vision of the future reflects the statewide BLM vision and applies this to the local setting. The vision of the future provides a context for development of management objectives, standard practices, performance goals, and priorities in the Ely RMP to reach the long-term goal of healthy ecological systems while supporting sustained economic uses and local community needs. A future of resilient and diverse landscapes is one that Ely Field Office employees will strive to achieve together with our neighbors in eastern Nevada and the American people.

Public Involvement

From the initiation of work on the RMP/EIS, the Ely Field Office has set consultation and coordination with affected or interested parties as a key priority. There have been five primary elements of consultation through preparation of the Draft RMP/EIS:

- RMP/EIS scoping process
- Planning bulletin mailings
- RMP/EIS web page
- Informal presentations to interested groups
- Cooperating agency involvement

In February 2003, a 60-day scoping period formally began with the publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on February 10, documenting BLM's intent to prepare an RMP/EIS. Individuals and organizations were invited to submit comments in writing to the BLM. Six public meetings were held in March/April, 2003, in Ely, Caliente, Mesquite, Las Vegas, Reno, and Tonopah, Nevada. Written comments also were received throughout the 60-day comment period, ending April 10, 2003. Scoping helps identify issues important to the management of the area and assists in determining the extent of the analysis as well as specific issues to be examined in the planning process.

RMP Management Focus

The restoration and maintenance of healthy ecological systems within watersheds is a primary focus for the future management of the Ely District. Healthy ecological systems are geographically diverse and change over time. They are compatible with soil potential and are resilient to disturbance.

Resources and resource uses will be managed to restore or maintain ecological health. Certain resource management changes and active treatments may need to be implemented, in portions of watersheds, to accomplish this objective. Adaptive management will be pursued to avoid deteriorating conditions that favor invasive plants and catastrophic fires. Any projects will be implemented so as to result in a mosaic of vegetation within a watershed.

In the long term, natural disturbance (such as drought or fire) will occur and fewer treatments will be needed to maintain ecological health. The result will be a variety of vegetation phases, which will provide diverse, healthy conditions for future generations.

Throughout the planning process, the BLM has and will continue to prepare planning bulletins to keep the public updated on the status of the RMP/EIS. These bulletins are distributed to a mailing list of over 3,000 interested parties and also are placed on the project web page so they can be retrieved electronically.

The Ely RMP/EIS web page "went live" in November 2002 and can be accessed by the public at <http://elyrmp.ensr.com>. The web page is a convenient way for the BLM to communicate with the public concerning the RMP/EIS, and it provides the public with instant access to the ongoing RMP/EIS process as well as background information on the BLM planning process.

The BLM Ely Field Office has strived to make the EIS process as inclusive as possible. In addition to input from the general public, BLM staff has encouraged participation and collaboration from multiple governmental entities and public organizations. BLM staff has attended numerous meetings in addition to

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

the six official public scoping meetings and provided presentations to organizations and commissions as invited.

Letters inviting various agencies and organizations to participate in the RMP/EIS planning process as cooperating agencies were sent to over 30 groups. Cooperating agencies are requested to assist in developing management direction and alternatives, reviewing environmental effects, and selecting a preferred alternative. Fourteen entities agreed to serve as cooperating agencies and have had varying levels of involvement in the development of this Draft RMP/EIS. These agencies and groups will continue to be involved through preparation of the Final RMP/EIS.

The BLM works in cooperation with American Indian tribes to coordinate and consult before making decisions or approving actions that could result in changes in land use, physical changes to lands or resources, changes in access, or changes in land ownership. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, require coordination with tribes in preparing and maintaining inventories of the public lands and determining their various resources and other values, developing and maintaining long-range plans providing for the use of the public lands, and managing the public lands. Federal programs are required to be carried out in a manner sensitive to American Indian concerns and tribal government planning and resource management programs.

Concurrent with the distribution of the Draft RMP/EIS, a Notice of Availability was published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register, which marks the beginning of the 90-day public review. BLM also published a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register announcing the availability of the Draft RMP/EIS for public review and comment.

The public comment period on the Ely District Draft RMP/EIS will extend for 90 days following publication of the Notice of Availability by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register. Comments that are received will be carefully reviewed, and substantive comments that could require changes in one or more of the alternatives, or in the analysis of environmental consequences will be identified. Necessary modifications and corrections will be made, and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS will be completed and released. If protests are received on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, they will be reviewed and resolved by the Director of the BLM. A Record of Decision and Approved Plan (or partial Record of Decision on those items that are not under protest) will then be released.

Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

The basic goal of developing alternatives was to prepare different combinations of management direction that would address issues and resolve conflicts among resources and resource uses. In addition to addressing issues, alternatives must meet the purpose and need stated for the RMP, must not be remote or speculative, and must be technically and economically practical or feasible. Each alternative is a complete land use plan that provides a framework for multiple use management of the full spectrum of resources, resource uses, and programs on the District. Under all alternatives, the Ely Field Office would manage the public lands in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and BLM policy and guidance, and to meet the Resource Advisory Council standards for rangeland health.

Overviews of each of the five alternatives considered in detail follow. A complete description of the management direction contained in each alternative can be found in Chapter 2.0 of this RMP/EIS. Vegetation treatment associated with watershed restoration is one of the key differentiators among the alternatives. **Table 1** presents four "basic drivers" that were considered in developing the alternatives and the quantitative and qualitative differences among the alternatives for each driver.

Overview of Alternatives

Alternative A

Alternative A is the continuation of existing management on the Ely District, also called the "No Action Alternative" under NEPA regulations. This alternative would continue present management practices based on existing land use plans and other management decision documents. Valid decisions contained in the Egan RMP, the Egan RMP Oil and Gas amendment, the Schell and Caliente MFP, and the Caliente MFP Desert Tortoise Amendment would be implemented if not already completed. Direction contained in existing laws, regulation, and policy also would continue to be implemented, sometimes superseding provisions of the Egan RMP and Schell and Caliente MFPs. Resources, resource uses, and sensitive habitats would receive management emphasis at present levels. Restoration of ecological systems would utilize either active or passive methods, and would be implemented primarily in reaction to changes that occur from events such as fire or other disturbances. Restoration activities would be conducted on approximately 10,000 acres per year. Increases in herbaceous vegetation resulting from restoration would be allocated to livestock and wild horses as directed in the existing plans. Vegetation communities would be managed to achieve appropriate composition of woody and herbaceous species that promote resiliency. This would involve a mosaic of vegetation communities having differing ages (since treatment) and differing composition and structure. The current levels, methods, and mix of multiple use management of public land would receive attention at present levels. The three ACECs designated in the Desert Tortoise Amendment would be retained. In general, most activities would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis, and few uses would be limited or excluded as long as land health standards could be met. Off-highway vehicle use would remain relatively unrestricted throughout the District; there would be no recreation management areas with an emphasis on off-highway vehicle use of designated roads and trails. Fire management would continue under the existing Ely Managed and Natural Fire Plan, which provides for the beneficial use of fire in selected situations.

Alternative B

Alternative B would emphasize the maintenance of those systems that are functioning and healthy and the restoration of ecological systems and their historic mosaic patterns that have been degraded or altered. There would be a coordinated effort to restore the resiliency of native vegetation in shrub communities, woodlands, and riparian areas. Commodity production would be constrained to protect resources and systems that display healthy ecological processes or to accelerate improvement in those areas that do not. Production of food, fiber, minerals, and services would be more constrained than in the other alternatives, and in some cases and some areas, uses would be excluded to protect sensitive resources. Restoration

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

would utilize either active (such as brush clearing) or passive (such as changes in livestock grazing) methods, and would be implemented proactively to build resiliency and resistance to changes that would degrade natural systems. Restoration activities would be accelerated in comparison to Alternative A and limited by available funding and resources. Increases in herbaceous vegetation resulting from restoration would be reserved for watershed maintenance and wildlife. Sagebrush communities would be managed to achieve a mosaic of herbaceous/shrub phases with minimal bare ground; interspaces between shrubs would be occupied by perennial grasses and forbs. The three ACECs designated in the Desert Tortoise Amendment would be retained, and 18 new ACECs also would be designated. Under this alternative, management would more often be applied across several vegetation types with a restoration emphasis on those areas most at risk of crossing a threshold into a less desirable vegetation community or ecological process, rather than focusing on specific sensitive resources in particular geographic areas. Off-highway vehicle use would be restricted to designated roads and trails; recreation management on approximately 310,000 acres would emphasize off-highway vehicle use of designated roads and trails. Fire use would be implemented to the greatest extent possible as a vegetation treatment tool following watershed analysis.

Alternative C

Alternative C would emphasize commodity production and production of food, fiber, minerals, and services, including provisions for several types of recreation. Under this alternative, constraints on commodity production for the protection of sensitive resources would be the least restrictive possible within the limits defined by law, regulation, and BLM policy, including the Endangered Species Act, cultural resource protection laws, and wetland preservation. In this alternative, constraints to protect sensitive resources would tend to be implemented in specified geographic areas rather than across the planning area. Active and organized recreation activities (such as off-highway vehicle use and races) would be emphasized in this alternative. Restoration of ecological systems would utilize either active or passive methods. Restoration activities would be accelerated in comparison to Alternative A and limited by available funding and resources. Increases in herbaceous vegetation resulting from restoration would be allocated to livestock. Land health restoration activities would focus on areas with understory vegetation appropriate for the ecological site, which could provide the production of additional forage. Sagebrush communities would be managed to achieve sites dominated by herbaceous vegetation (i.e., grasses) with some shrubs. The three ACECs designated in the Desert Tortoise Amendment would be retained, and 20 new ACECs also would be designated. Off-highway vehicle use would be restricted to designated roads and trails; recreation management on approximately 734,000 acres would emphasize off-highway vehicle use of designated roads and trails. All wildland fires would be suppressed and prescribed fires would be used only in limited situations as a vegetation treatment tool.

Alternative D

Alternative D would exclude all permitted, discretionary uses of the public lands including livestock grazing, mineral sale or leasing, lands and realty actions (such as disposals, leases, rights-of-way), recreation uses requiring permits, etc. The Ely Field Office would petition the Department of the Interior to withdraw a majority of the planning area from locatable mineral entry. This alternative would allow no commodity production and would include management actions necessary to maintain or enhance resources and protect

life and property. Any management actions would utilize primarily passive methods. Active restoration would be restricted to previously treated areas (such as chainings and seedings), areas dominated by invasive species, and newly disturbed areas (such as those resulting from wild fires). Restoration activities would be focused toward a much narrower set of conditions than in Alternatives B and C. Such restoration would be primarily in reaction to changing conditions. Increases in herbaceous vegetation resulting from restoration would be reserved for watershed maintenance and wildlife or allocated wild horses. Sagebrush communities would be managed to protect existing native communities and to prevent invasions of annual exotic species. No ACECs would be retained or designated. Off-highway vehicle use would be restricted to maintained roads. Some components of the alternative may not be possible to implement because of legal constraints, but the alternative is included for purposes of impact comparison. Wildland fires would not be suppressed unless they are human-caused or threaten life or property.

Alternative E

Alternative E is the Ely Field Office's preferred alternative, and represents a shift from a commodity or individual resource allocation approach to an ecological systems approach to management (as described for the Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project in Section 1.3.3.1). This alternative emphasizes improvement in ecological conditions and a high level of natural resource protection created by managing natural and manmade disturbances to avoid crossing vegetation thresholds while also providing for resource uses. This alternative would balance the need to restore, enhance, and protect resources, with the public's desire to provide for the production of food, fiber, minerals, and services on public lands. This would be done within the limits of an ecological system's ability to sustainably provide these products and services within the constraints of various laws and regulations. Restoration would utilize either active or passive methods, and would be implemented proactively to build resiliency to prevent further degradation of ecological systems. Restoration activities would be accelerated in comparison to Alternative A and limited by available funding and resources. Increases in herbaceous vegetation resulting from restoration would be distributed in a balanced approach with reservations for watershed and wildlife and allocations to livestock, and wild horses. Sagebrush communities would be managed to achieve a variety (mosaic) of phases (age classes) of sagebrush types with emphasis on shrub/herbaceous communities. Vegetation resources and fish and wildlife habitats would be restored and enhanced using a variety of tools, but to a lesser extent than Alternative B. However, constraints to protect sensitive resources could be implemented in specified geographic areas. The three ACECs designated in the Desert Tortoise Amendment would be retained, and 18 new ACECs also would be designated. Off-highway vehicle use would be restricted to designated roads and trails; recreation management on approximately 734,000 acres would emphasize off-highway vehicle use of designated roads and trails. Fire use would be implemented to the greatest extent possible as a vegetation treatment tool following watershed analysis.

Issues and Impact Conclusions

Planning issues were developed incorporating input from a number of sources including the public during scoping, interested organizations, cooperating agencies, and BLM resource specialists. These issues were considered in the formulation of alternatives and analysis of impacts. A comparison of environmental impact

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

conclusions by alternative is presented in **Table 2**. Cumulative impact conclusions for the Proposed Action (Alternative E) are presented in **Table 3**.

Decisions to be Made

Land use plan decisions, which are made on a broad (programmatic) scale, guide subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. Specific projects for any given resource, resource use, or program that are not analyzed in this RMP/EIS will be detailed in future activity plans or site-specific proposals, and additional NEPA analysis and documentation will be conducted as needed.

After comments on the Draft RMP/EIS are received and reviewed, the responsible BLM officials can decide to modify any alternative (for example combine parts of different alternatives) and analyze the environmental consequences of the modified alternative in the Final RMP/EIS.

The alternative selected for implementation will be presented in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, which will be available to the public. There will be a 30-day protest period, followed by resolution of any protests and release of a Record of Decision.

Table 1
Summary of Key Features by Alternative

POLICY DIRECTION				
The Unified Federal Policy for a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management, 43 Code of Federal Regulations 4180.1, BLM Manual 4180 – Rangeland Health Standards, and BLM Handbook H-4180 – 1, mandate and provide guidance for completion of the watershed analysis process, leading to development of restoration goals for meeting land health standards.				
ALTERNATIVE				
A	B	C	D	E
BASIC DRIVERS				
Total Treatment Area (acres) ¹				
2,782,100	6,214,530	7,592,310	3,633,450	6,229,570
Total Maintenance Area (acres) ²				
8,030,300	4,597,870	3,220,090	7,178,950	4,582,830
Vegetation Types Emphasized for Treatment				
Low-elevation Sagebrush	Low-elevation Sagebrush and Pinyon-Juniper	Same as Alternative B	Exotic seedlings and invasive species	Same as Alternative B
Use of Extra Forage Made Available from Restoration Actions				
Allocation to livestock and wild horses	Reserve for watershed health and wildlife use	Allocation to livestock	Allocation to wild horses and reserve for watershed health and wildlife use	Allocation to livestock and wild horses and reserve for watershed health and wildlife use

¹Treatment areas are composite acreage of vegetation communities and conditions needing active treatment to achieve a range of healthy conditions. Total acreage does not include Mojave Desert or riparian vegetation communities, which would not be the subject of major active vegetation treatments.

²Maintenance areas are composite acreage of vegetation communities and conditions where management may be used to maintain current conditions or achieve a range of healthy conditions without implementation of active treatment methods. Total acreage does not include Mojave Desert or riparian vegetation communities, which would not be the subject of major active vegetation treatments.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Vegetation				
Parameter – Pinyon-juniper Woodland				
Continue case-by-case management to reduce the amount of over-mature woodlands or woodlands near the threshold of mature/over-mature.	Pinyon-juniper communities would be proactively managed to achieve a variety of disturbance-resistant phases that would be resilient to disturbance and provide essential wildlife habitat.	Pinyon-juniper communities would be managed to achieve phases that would provide more products for commercial use.	Natural processes would be allowed to occur within pinyon-juniper woodlands and most discretionary land uses would be eliminated.	Same as Alternative B.
Actively treat 1,149,900 acres (32%) of the pinyon-juniper woodland and maintain 2,443,500 acres (68%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 2,766,900 acres (77%) of the pinyon-juniper woodland and maintain 826,500 acres (23%) that are in desired states.	Same as Alternative B.	Allow wildland fires and weed treatment on 1,868,600 acres (52%) of the pinyon-juniper woodland and maintain 1,724,800 acres (48%) that are in desired states.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Aspen				
Select aspen communities would be managed to increase regeneration of aspen trees and understory species.	Proactive management of aspen communities would cause them to remain in or move toward resilient phases that would be resistant to disturbance.	Aspen sites would be managed to achieve phases that support commodity production.	Natural processes would be allowed to occur and management would primarily be passive. Most discretionary land uses would be eliminated.	Same as Alternative B.
Actively treat 1,400 acres (20%) of the aspen woodland and maintain 5,600 acres (80%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 4,130 acres (59%) of the aspen woodland and maintain 2,870 acres (41%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 4,830 acres (69%) of the aspen woodland and maintain 2,170 acres (31%) that are in desired states.	Allow fire use and weed treatment on 1,050 acres (35%) of the aspen woodland.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – High Elevation Conifer Species (White Fir, Ponderosa Pine, Limber Pine, Bristlecone Pine, Engelmann Spruce, etc.)				
Management actions would focus on the introduction of fire through the management of wildland fire or prescribed fire.	Management actions would focus on preventative rather than remedial treatments before sites cross thresholds to undesirable phases.	Accessible sites would be managed for commodity products.	Passive management would allow natural processes to occur.	Same as Alternative C.
Actively treat 9,600 acres (17%) of the high-elevation conifer species and maintain 46,400 acres (83%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 29,200 acres (52%) of the high-elevation conifer species and maintain 26,800 acres (48%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 44,240 acres (79%) of the high-elevation conifer species and maintain 11,760 acres (21%) that are in desired states.	Allow fire use and weed treatment on 28,000 acres (50%) of the high-elevation conifer species.	Same as Alternative C.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Parameter – Salt Desert Shrub (Shadscale, Winterfat, Four-Wing Salt Bush, etc.)				
Treat and restore select habitat sites that have been invaded by exotic species at the watershed level.	Manage to achieve plant composition within the desired range of conditions to increase or decrease shrubs and perennial herbaceous composition and restore areas invaded by exotic species.	Manage to increase forage production for commodity use and maintain diverse mosaics and connectivity between geographic areas to provide required habitat for game species, especially special status and threatened and endangered species.	Passively manage existing native salt desert shrub communities and actively treat invasions of exotic species.	Same as Alternative B.
Actively treat 219,800 acres (18%) of the salt desert shrub and maintain 1,001,200 acres (82%) that are in desired states.	Same as Alternative A.	Actively treat 390,700 acres (32%) of the salt desert shrub and maintain 830,300 acres (68%) that are in desired states.	Allow fire use and weed treatment on 219,800 acres (18%) of the salt desert shrub.	Same as Alternative A.
Parameter – Sagebrush (basin big sagebrush, Wyoming big sagebrush, mountain big sagebrush, and black sagebrush)				
Treat areas where pinyon-juniper is encroaching into sagebrush sites. Maintain plant communities in the herbaceous and shrub states. Increase the use of fire and increase seeding following fire.	Manage to achieve plant composition within the desired range of conditions to increase or decrease sagebrush overstory for specific habitat objectives.	Manage to achieve high productivity of commodity values while maintaining and enhancing ecological health and resilience.	Allow sagebrush communities to function as naturally as possible with minimal influence from management or resource uses. Return sagebrush areas that have been seeded with nonnative species to native species.	Same as Alternative B.
Actively treat 1,348,700 acres (24%) of the sagebrush and maintain 4,270,800 acres (76%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 3,090,700 acres (55%) of the sagebrush and maintain 2,528,800 acres (45%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 4,214,600 acres (75%) of the sagebrush and maintain 1,404,900 acres (25%) that are in desired states.	Allow fire use and weed treatment on 1,461,100 acres (26%) of the sagebrush.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Mountain Mahogany				
Manage in the same way as the associated or surrounding sagebrush communities.	Manage proactively to maintain or enhance diversity, mosaics, and connectivity of the surrounding sagebrush communities and satisfy wildlife habitat requirements.	Manage to achieve the phases with the greatest potential for commodity production. Emphasize wildlife habitat needs in critical habitat areas only.	Allow natural processes to occur. Limit land uses and treat areas where invasive and nonnative species are present.	Same as Alternative B.
Actively treat 6,900 acres (15%) of the mountain mahogany and maintain 39,100 acres (85%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 23,000 acres (50%) of the mountain mahogany and maintain 23,000 acres (50%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 36,340 acres (79%) of the mountain mahogany and maintain 9,660 acres (21%) that are in desired states.	Allow fire use and weed treatment on 25,300 acres (55%) of the mountain mahogany.	Same as Alternative B.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Parameter – Mojave Desert Vegetation				
Manage uses in the Mojave Desert areas to maintain or improve vegetation composition and protect critical desert tortoise habitat.	Same as Alternative A, except that livestock grazing would be eliminated and all Mojave Desert vegetation within desert tortoise habitat (approximately 850,000 acres) would be protected from conversion to undesirable vegetation.	Manage for desired range of conditions with an emphasis on providing watershed protection and commodity uses.	Allow Mojave Desert communities to function as naturally as possible. Livestock grazing would be eliminated.	Same as Alternative A.
Parameter – Riparian/Wetlands				
Manage uses to achieve or make progress toward proper functioning condition.	Maintain or restore plant community structure and composition of desired grasses, sedges, forbs and shrubs on riparian habitats where possible and as appropriate to site potential.	Maintain or restore plant community structure and composition of desired species of grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs on riparian habitats where possible and as appropriate to site potential while providing for commodity production.	Manage riparian areas and allow natural processes to occur as nearly as possible. Treat riparian areas that have invasive or exotic species.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Nonnative Seedlings				
Manage uses to maintain or improve the composition of understory species for multiple use objectives.	Manage nonnative seedlings to achieve the desired range of conditions.	Manage to allow the majority of the area to remain in the herbaceous and shrub states.	Restore nonnative seedlings to the original native plant community.	Same as Alternative B.
Actively treat 45,800 acres (17%) of the nonnative seedlings and maintain 223,700 acres (83%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 80,800 acres (30%) of the nonnative seedlings and maintain 188,700 acres (70%) that are in desired states.	Actively treat 134,700 acres (50%) of the nonnative seedlings and maintain 134,800 acres (50%) that are in desired states.	Allow fire use and weed treatment on 29,600 acres (11%) of the nonnative seedlings.	Same as Alternative B.
Wild Horses				
Parameter – Herd Management Area Establishment				
Manage wild horses within 24 herd management areas covering approximately 5.36 million acres.	Manage wild horses within 6 herd management areas covering approximately 3.6 million acres.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative A except no population limits would be established within herd management areas.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Population Management				
Manage populations within existing appropriate management levels or ranges. Gather when necessary to approximately 40 percent below management level number to	Manage populations within ranges of appropriate management levels.	Same as Alternative B.	Do not limit or manage populations within herd management areas. Remove wild horses outside the herd management areas from public lands.	Same as Alternative B.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
allow population growth before the next gather cycle.				
Parameter – Genetic Health/Viability				
Manage wild horses within the 24 herd management areas regardless of habitat conditions.	Manage wild horses in herd management areas only where habitat conditions can support a long-term genetically viable population.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative B.
Lands and Realty				
Parameter – Retention of Public Lands				
Retain big game habitat, upland game habitat, and/or wild horse herd management areas.	Retain public land or interest in lands that would contribute to the restoration and health of the land within the District.	Same as Alternative B.	No net loss of public lands in the planning area.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Disposal of Public Lands				
Dispose of lands, identified for disposal case-by-case, under existing authorizations. Dispose of lands outside designated big game and upland game habitat, and/or wild horse herd management areas on a case-by-case basis.	Dispose of lands only in identified areas. No disposal of critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, and sensitive species.	Land disposal would be balanced with restoration while emphasizing commercial and economic development.	No net loss of public lands in the planning area.	Dispose of lands in identified areas.
Parameter – Acquisitions				
Acquire land on a case-by-case basis. Encourage local governments and private individuals to acquire options on or enter into non-binding agreements to purchase environmentally sensitive private lands or rights to private lands within ACECs, wilderness study areas or designated wilderness that could potentially be exchanged for public lands outside of ACECs.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Legislative disposals would be implemented as mandated, but administrative disposals could not occur until sufficient "replacement lands" would be acquired to achieve no net loss.	Same as Alternative A.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Parameter – Withdrawal of Public Land				
Consider requests for new withdrawals, withdrawal relinquishments, or modifications on a case-by-case basis.	All Entry: Withdraw from surface and mineral entry, lands with sensitive or high resource values. Consider requests by other federal agencies for new withdrawals, withdrawal relinquishments, or modifications on a case-by-case basis.	No new withdrawals would be designated.	Consider requests by other federal agencies for new withdrawals, withdrawal relinquishments, or modifications on a case-by-case basis.	Same as Alternative B.
Mineral Entry Only: Withdraw 14,770 acres of land identified for potential disposal.	Mineral Entry Only: Withdraw from mineral entry, 64,156 acres of land identified for potential disposal.	Mineral Entry Only: Withdraw from mineral entry, 200,243 acres of land identified for potential disposal.	Mineral Entry Only: Withdraw 12,790 acres of land identified for potential disposal.	Mineral Entry Only: Withdraw 71,999 acres of land identified for potential disposal.
Parameter – Corridor Designations				
No additional corridors would be designated.	Designated corridors would be 0.5 mile in width.	Designated corridors would be 3 miles in width.	There would be no designation of additional corridors.	Same as Alternative B.
No additional corridors would be designated.	A corridor 0.5 mile wide would be designated in Spring Valley, White Pine County.	A new corridor 3 miles wide would be designated in Spring Valley, White Pine County.	There would be no designation of additional corridors.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Communication Sites				
Authorize new communication sites on a case-by-case basis.	Create new communication sites after existing sites are at maximum capacity.	Provide communication site locations that support community and economic development.	Establish specific limited communication site areas based on minimal impacts to public lands.	Communication site locations would support community and economic development - emphasis on co-location of sites.
Parameter – Land Use Authorizations (Rights-of-way, Permits, Leases, and Easements)				
Issue land use authorizations on a case-by-case basis.	Where feasible, locate and consolidate new land use authorizations within or adjacent to existing authorizations. ACECs would be avoidance or exclusion areas.	Process land use authorizations to facilitate community and economic development. ACECs would be avoidance or exclusion areas.	No new land use authorizations.	Issue land use authorizations on a case-by-case basis.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Travel Management and Off-highway Vehicle Use				
Parameter – Transportation Plan				
Outside desert tortoise habitat, road and trail designation would be on a case-by-case basis.	All motorized vehicle traffic would be limited to designated roads and trails. Wilderness Study Areas would be closed to motorized traffic. Designate roads and trails to emphasize landscape restoration.	Designate roads and trails to emphasize specific administrative needs, recreation opportunities, and tourism.	All motorized vehicle travel would be limited to designated roads and trails. Road and trail designations would be limited to mechanically maintained roads.	Road and trail designations would emphasize specific administrative needs, recreation, and tourism. Limit all vehicular traffic to designated roads and trails, exceptions apply.
Parameter – Off-highway Vehicles				
Manage off-highway vehicles in accordance with the following designations.	Manage off-highway vehicles in accordance with the following designations.	Manage off-highway vehicles in accordance with the following designations.	Off-highway vehicles would be limited to maintained roads and trails).	Same as Alternative B.
9,836,000 acres – open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use	0 acres – open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use.	32,000 acres – open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use (dry lake beds).	0 acres – open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use.	Same as Alternative B.
804,000 acres – limited to designated roads and trails (Wilderness Study Areas and the Desert Tortoise Amendment Area).	10,338,000 acres – limited to designated roads and trails.	10,608,000 acres – limited to designated roads and trails.	Approximately 400,000 acres – limited to designated roads and trails.	Same as Alternative B.
760,000 acres – closed to off-highway vehicle use.	1,062,000 acres – closed to off-highway vehicle use (designated wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas).	760,000 acres – closed to off-highway vehicle -use.	11,000,000 acres – closed to off-highway vehicle use.	Same as Alternative B.
Recreation				
Parameter – Special Recreation Management Areas				
Manage an estimated 750,000 acres as one Special Recreation Management Area.	Manage 2,680,000 acres as nine Special Recreation Management Areas.	Manage 3,310,000 acres as nine Special Recreation Management Areas.	No Special Recreation Management Areas would be managed and existing developed sites would be eliminated.	Same as Alternative B.
Emphasis would be on maintaining existing developed facilities.	Emphasis would be to promote recreation across a wide spectrum of opportunities, both developed and undeveloped.	Emphasis would be focused on additional developed recreation sites.	There would be no Special Recreation Management Areas.	Same as Alternative B.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Parameter – Special Recreation Permits				
No limitations on outfitter and guide permits for hunting.	Issue outfitter and guide permits for hunting through a competitive bid process with no limits on the number of permits offered.	Same as Alternative A.	No outfitter and guide permits for hunting would be issued.	Limit outfitter and guide permits for the first 3 years following plan implementation to parties who have had a permit for the previous 3 years. Monitor use for 3 years to establish permit numbers for geographic areas. After the monitoring period, issue permits by an open competitive bid process, limiting the number of sub-guides that could operate.
No recreation management areas with an emphasis of off-highway vehicle use of designated roads and trails.	Recreation management on approximately 310,000 acres would emphasize off-highway vehicle use of designated roads and trails.	Recreation management on approximately 734,000 acres would emphasize off-highway vehicle use of designated roads and trails..	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative C.
Limit motorcycle events to twelve races on routes subject to NEPA analysis.	Establish two special recreation permit areas totaling approximately 656,000 acres to maximize opportunities for motorcycle special recreation permit events.	Establish four special recreation permit areas totaling approximately 1.36 million acres to maximize opportunities for motorcycle special recreation permit events.	No motorcycle events would be permitted.	Same as Alternative C.
A maximum of two truck events would be permitted each year on race routes subject to NEPA analysis.	Same as Alternative A.	A maximum of eight truck events would be permitted each year on twelve routes established for all truck events.	No truck events would be permitted.	A maximum of two truck events would be permitted each year on four routes established for all truck events.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Livestock Grazing				
Parameter – Lands Available for Livestock Grazing				
Approximately 11,174,000 acres would be available for livestock grazing subject to modification associated with disposal actions (see.	Approximately 7,568,000 acres would be available for livestock grazing consistent with maintaining and restoring watershed function and health subject to modification associated with disposal actions.	Approximately 11,164,000 acres would be available for livestock grazing subject to modification associated with disposal actions. The Tamberlaine Allotment would be used as forage reserves if the permit is relinquished.	Eliminate livestock grazing throughout the district.	Approximately 11,171,000 acres would be available for livestock grazing consistent with maintaining and restoring watershed function and health and subject to modification associated with disposal actions. Future modifications could also occur based upon monitoring of tortoise habitat.
No additional acres are identified for livestock closure based on resource reasons.	The remaining 542,100 acres of tortoise habitat within the district would be closed to livestock grazing. In addition, 3,038,100 acres of desert bighorn and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep ranges and migration routes and 25,700 acres in newly designated ACECs would be closed.	Approximately 9,600 acres in newly designated ACECs would be closed to livestock grazing.		No domestic sheep or goat grazing would be allowed within 9 miles of desert bighorn sheep habitat, except where topographic features or other barriers prevent physical contact. Approximately 3,300 acres in newly designated ACECs would be closed to livestock grazing.
Continue to manage the Haypress Allotment (7,843 acres) as a livestock grazing allotment. The area would not be managed as a horse preserve and would not be identified for potential disposal.	Same as Alternative A.	Manage the 7,843 acres currently in the Haypress Allotment as a horse preserve in partnership with the National Mustang Association, or some other entity. Close the allotment to livestock grazing. Identify the 7,843 acres for potential disposal.	No livestock grazing.	Same as Alternative C.
Parameter – Permit Administration				
Authorized active use fluctuates above and below the total active use or level of use authorized in the grazing permit. Authorized active use above the total active use is temporary nonrenewable. Active use not activated is	Authorized use would not exceed the total active use or level of use authorized in the grazing permit.	Authorized use could exceed the total active use or level of use authorized in the grazing permit based on performance-based grazing.	No livestock grazing.	Actual use would fluctuate above and below the total active use or level of use authorized in the grazing permit. Authorize performance-based grazing on a case-by-case basis.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
nonuse.				
Parameter – Kind of Livestock				
Conversions from cattle to sheep; or sheep to cattle, horse or goat, are authorized based on forage type, topography, and available water.	Authorize changes in kind of livestock based on achievement of standards for rangeland health or other multiple use objectives through watershed analysis.	Same as Alternative B.	No livestock grazing.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Livestock Management in Bighorn Sheep Ranges				
Domestic sheep would continue to be managed in consideration of the Revised Guidelines for Management of Domestic Sheep and Goats in Native Wild Sheep Habitats (IM No-98-140) when proposed changes to BLM grazing permits are being considered.	Domestic livestock (sheep and cattle) grazing would be eliminated in all Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep ranges and migration routes.	Same as Alternative A.	No livestock grazing.	Same as Alternative A.
Domestic sheep would continue to be managed in consideration of the Revised Guidelines for Management of Domestic Sheep and Goats in Native Wild Sheep Habitats (IM No-98-140) when proposed changes to BLM grazing permits are being considered.	Domestic livestock (sheep and cattle) grazing would be eliminated in all desert bighorn sheep ranges and migration routes.	Same as Alternative A.	No livestock grazing.	No domestic sheep or goat grazing would be allowed within 9 miles of desert bighorn sheep habitat, except where topographic features or other barriers prevent physical contact.
Parameter – Non-use Relinquished Permits				
Allow for application of relinquished grazing permits.	Allow for flexibility in the management of relinquished permits to facilitate achievement of watershed goals and rangeland health standards. Manage the Tamberlaine Allotment for wildlife if the permit is relinquished.	Allow for flexibility in the management of relinquished permits to create forage reserves for research and/or temporary use by permittees who are displaced for any reason. Manage the Tamberlaine Allotment as a forage reserve if the permit is relinquished.	No livestock grazing.	Same as Alternative C.
Parameter – Temporary Nonrenewable				
Authorize temporary nonrenewable grazing use on a case-by-case basis.	Authorize no temporary nonrenewable grazing use.	Same as Alternative A.	No livestock grazing.	Same as Alternative A.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Parameter – Water Hauling				
Authorize water hauling to improve livestock distribution.	Authorize water hauling to achieve rangeland health standards on a watershed basis.	Same as Alternative A.	No livestock grazing.	Same as Alternative B.
Woodland and Native Plant Products				
Parameter – Fuelwood Collection				
Allow collection of fuelwood for personal and commercial use District-wide except in closed areas.	Allow fuelwood collection for personal and commercial use in designated areas only; harvesting of live trees allowed on a case-by-case basis in designated areas.	Same as Alternative A. No restrictions on harvesting live trees.	No fuelwood collection.	Same as Alternative A except the collection of other tree species could be designated.
Parameter – Pinyon Pine Nut Harvesting				
Free personal use of up to 25 pounds District-wide. Commercial use is allowed in designated areas to the highest bidder.	Same as Alternative A except prior to designating areas for commercial use, consultation with American Indian tribes would occur. American Indians would not be subject to the 25-pound personal use limitation.	Same as Alternative A.	Only personal use, including American Indians, would be allowed. No commercial use.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Christmas Tree Harvesting				
Pinyon and juniper are available for personal and commercial use District-wide.	Pinyon, juniper, and white fir would be available for personal use District-wide. Only pinyon and juniper would be available for commercial use District-wide. White fir could be available for commercial use in some areas.	Pinyon, juniper, spruce, and white fir would be available for personal and commercial use District-wide.	No Christmas tree harvesting allowed.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Post and Pole Harvesting				
Pinyon and juniper are available for personal and commercial use in non-restricted areas District-wide. Commercial harvest locations would be designated at the time of sale.	Pinyon and juniper would be available for personal and commercial use District-wide except in restricted areas. Use of aspen, fir, and spruce would be allowed on a case-by-case basis.	Pinyon, juniper, aspen, fir, and spruce would be available for personal and commercial use District-wide.	No post and pole harvest allowed.	Same as Alternative B.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Parameter – Seed Collection				
Commercial use (hand collection and limited mechanical collection) allowed on a case-by-case basis.	Commercial use (hand collection and limited mechanical collection) allowed except in restoration areas.	Same as Alternative B. Hand and mechanical collection methods would be allowed.	No commercial use allowed. Hand collection allowed for personal use.	Commercial use (hand collection and limited mechanical collection) allowed except in restoration areas.
Parameter – Cactus and Yucca Collection				
Personal use allowed on a case-by-case basis, primarily associated with salvage operations.	Same as Alternative A.	Personal and commercial use allowed District-wide.	Collection not allowed.	Personal and commercial use allowed on a case-by-case basis.
Parameter – Other Vegetation Product Collection (e.g., wildings, boughs, etc.)				
Personal and commercial use allowed on a case-by-case basis.	Same as Alternative A.	Commercial use allowed District-wide.	Collection not allowed.	Same as Alternative A.
Geology and Mineral Extraction				
Parameter – Fluid Leasable Minerals				
7,752,700 acres – open to leasing.	1,117,600 acres – open to leasing.	4,051,100 acres – open to leasing.	0 acres – open to leasing.	1,117,700 acres – open to leasing.
0 acres – open to leasing, subject to programmatic stipulations.	8,552,400 acres – open to leasing, subject to programmatic stipulations for sage grouse, ferruginous hawk, big horn sheep, and cultural resources. For wildlife stipulations, BLM would determine on a site specific basis whether or not stipulations would apply. Company provides for site specific survey if required. Large areas subject to potential stipulations.	228,000 acres – open to leasing, subject to programmatic cultural stipulations. (An additional 411,330 acres of programmatic cultural resources overlap other resource surface use and timing restrictions.)	0 acres – open to leasing, subject to programmatic stipulations.	8,581,100 acres – open to leasing, subject to programmatic stipulations for sage grouse, ferruginous hawk, big horn sheep, and cultural resources. For wildlife stipulations, BLM would determine on a site specific basis whether or not stipulations would apply. Company provides for site specific survey if required. Large areas subject to potential stipulations.
2,291,700 acres – open to leasing subject to minor constraints. Traditional specific area timing and surface use stipulations would apply.	446,000 acres – open to leasing subject to minor constraints. Traditional specific area timing and surface use stipulations (desert tortoise habitat) would apply.	5,629,900 acres – open to leasing, subject to minor constraints. Traditional specific area surface use and timing restrictions would apply unless lessee applies to BLM for exception. More defined areas subject to stipulations.	0 acres – open to leasing, subject to minor constraints.	448,300 acres – open to leasing subject to minor constraints. Traditional specific area timing and surface use stipulations (desert tortoise habitat) would apply.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
231,200 acres – open to leasing subject to major constraints (No Surface Occupancy).	36,100 acres – open to leasing subject to major constraints (No Surface Occupancy).	56,600 acres – open to leasing subject to major constraints (No Surface Occupancy).	0 acres – open to leasing subject to major constraints (No Surface Occupancy).	40,000 acres – open to leasing subject to major constraints (No Surface Occupancy).
1,124,400 acres – closed to leasing.	1,247,900 acres – closed to leasing.	1,434,400 acres – closed to leasing.	11,400,000 acres – closed to leasing.	1,212,900 acres – closed to leasing.
Evaluate oil and gas geophysical exploration on a case-by-case basis	No geophysical exploration in areas closed to leasing or with No Surface Occupancy.	Consider geophysical exploration in areas closed to leasing or with No Surface Occupancy and/or timing restrictions, based on impacts identified in site specific analysis.	Seismic and geophysical exploration activities would only be allowed in non sensitive areas.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Solid Leasable Minerals				
10,263,400 acres – open to solid mineral leasing.	10,121,000 acres – open to solid mineral leasing.	9,914,000 acres – open to solid mineral leasing.	0 acres – open to solid mineral leasing.	10,165,600 acres – open to solid mineral leasing.
1,136,600 acres – closed to mineral entry.	1,279,000 acres – closed to solid mineral leasing.	1,486,000 acres – closed to solid mineral leasing.	11,400,000 acres – closed to solid mineral leasing.	1,234,400 acres – closed to solid mineral leasing.
Parameter – Locatable Minerals				
10,265,400 acres – open to locatable mineral entry.	10,121,000 acres – open to locatable mineral entry.	9,914,000 acres – open to locatable mineral entry	4,189,000 acres – open to locatable mineral entry.	10,165,600 acres – open to locatable mineral entry.
1,136,600 acres – proposed for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry.	1,279,000 acres – proposed for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry.	1,486,000 acres – proposed for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry	7,211,000 acres – proposed for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry.	1,234,400 acres – proposed for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry.
Parameter – Saleable Mineral				
10,036,300 acres – open for mineral materials disposal subject to discretionary closures in resource sensitive areas.	9,564,300 acres – open for mineral materials disposal subject to discretionary closures in resource sensitive areas.	9,375,600 acres – open for mineral materials disposal subject to discretionary closures in resource sensitive areas.	0 acres – open to mineral material disposal subject to discretionary closures in resource sensitive areas.	9,608,400 acres – open to mineral material disposal subject to discretionary closures in resource sensitive areas.
1,363,700 acres – closed to mineral material disposal.	1,835,700 acres – closed to mineral material disposal.	2,024,400 acres – closed to mineral material disposal.	11,400,000 acres – closed to mineral material disposal.	1,791,600 acres – closed to mineral material disposal.
Saleable mineral pit spacing varies within the District.	No saleable mineral pits within 5 miles of each other.	Saleable mineral pits would be appropriately spaced as determined by the authorized officer.	Sales would be allowed only from existing pits.	Same as Alternative B

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
Fire Management				
Parameter – Fire Management				
Implement the current fire management plan.	Develop fire management plans to ensure fire use is implemented to the greatest extent possible following watershed analysis and native vegetation resilience to fire has been improved.	Suppress all wildland fires. Use prescribed fire in limited situations as a management tool for vegetation restoration.	Develop a new fire management plan with emphasis on no suppression of wildland fires unless they are human-caused or threaten life and/or property.	Same as Alternative B.
Invasive and Nonnative Plant Species, Including Noxious Weeds				
Parameter – Invasive and Nonnative Plant Species Management				
Integrated pest management would be used to treat weed infestations.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A except herbicide restrictions apply.	Same as Alternative A.
Special Designations				
Parameter – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern				
Retain the three current ACECs, totaling 212,500 acres.	Retain the three current ACECs, totaling 212,500 acres. Designate 18 new ACECs totaling 147,400 acres.	Retain the three current ACECs, totaling 212,500 acres. Designate 20 new ACECs totaling 142,800 acres.	Designate no new ACECs and remove ACEC designation from the three existing ACECs.	Retain the three current ACECs, totaling 212,500 acres. Designate 18 new ACECs totaling 138,900 acres.
Parameter – Back Country Byways				
Designate no additional Back Country Byways.	Designate the Silver State Trail Back Country Byway.	Designate the Rainbow Canyon and Silver State Trail Back Country Byways.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative C.
Parameter – Wilderness Study Areas				
Only those designated Wilderness Study Areas are managed to preserve wilderness characteristics.	Emphasize other multiple uses and apply management restrictions to reduce impacts to some or all of the wilderness characteristics outside of designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas.	Emphasize other multiple uses as a priority over protecting wilderness characteristics outside of designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas.	Emphasize the protection of some, or all, of the wilderness characteristics outside of designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas through means other than designating as a Wilderness Study Area.	Same as Alternative B.
Parameter – Other Special Designations				
Retain 23 special designation areas totaling 34,495 acres.	Retain 3 special designation areas totaling 1,810 acres.	Retain 2 special designation areas totaling 600 acres.	None of the 23 special designation areas would be retained.	Same as Alternative B.
No existing special designation areas would be changed.	Drop 8 areas from special designation totaling 2,155 acres.	Drop 7 areas from special designation totaling 1,995 acres.	None of the 23 special designation areas would be retained.	Same as Alternative B.

Table 1 (Continued)

OTHER KEY FEATURES				
A	B	C	D	E
No existing special designation areas would be designated as ACECs.	12 special designation areas, totaling 30,530 acres, would be designated as ACECs. An additional 28,700 acres associated with Mount Irish and Hendry's Creek/Rock Animal Corral would be also designated as part of these ACECs.	14 special designation areas, totaling 31,900 acres, would be designated as ACECs. An additional 28,700 acres associated with Mount Irish and Hendry's Creek/Rock Animal Corral would be also designated as part of these ACECs.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative B.
17 special designation areas, totaling 12,705 acres, would be withdrawn from disposal under the public land laws.	12 special designation areas, totaling 11,630 acres, would be withdrawn from disposal under the public land laws.	Same as Alternative B.	None of the 23 special designation areas would be withdrawn from disposal.	Same as Alternative B.
Three special designation areas, totaling 2,490 would be segregated from disposal under the public land laws.	One special designation (Garnet Hill) area, totaling 1,210 acres, would be segregated from disposal under the public land laws.	Same as Alternative B.	None of the 23 special designation areas would be segregated from disposal.	Same as Alternative B.

Table 2
Summary Comparison of Impacts

CLIMATE AND AIR QUALITY	
Goal – Meet all applicable local, state, Tribal, and National Ambient Air Quality Standards under the Clean Air Act (as amended), and prevent significant deterioration of air quality within the Ely District from all direct and authorized actions.	
Alternative A	Air quality in the District is largely impacted by fire management decisions. Short-term impacts of fugitive dust from recreational events also can impact air quality. The existing Ely District Managed Natural and Prescribed Fire Plan would continue to be implemented with decisions regarding individual fires based in part on determination of where in the District fire would be beneficial and where it may be detrimental. Unplanned fires tend to burn hotter and longer than controlled burns resulting in more emissions and potentially worse air quality.
Alternative B	This alternative would likely result in more small fires and fewer major fires, and may improve air quality in the District.
Alternative C	In the short term, air quality impacts from fire could be lessened over the present. In the long term, air quality is likely to be impacted by greater numbers of large-scale fires producing more emissions.
Alternative D	Air quality would be impacted in both the short term and long term by an increased probability for occurrence of large-scale fire events.
Alternative E	Alternative E would be similar to Alternative B, in which fire would be used as a tool in vegetation management to the greatest extent possible. This approach would likely result in more small fires and fewer major fires, and may improve air quality in the District compared to Alternative A.
WATER RESOURCES	
Goal – Restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the waters in the Ely District to maintain healthy ecological systems while sustaining multiple uses.	
Alternative A	Since restoration currently does not keep pace with the decline in ecological trends, groundwater recharge and seasonal surface water flows would be expected to decline. Shorter term runoff events (e.g., thunderstorms, snowmelt) would continue to exhibit their current timing and volume, or may occur over shorter time scales and with somewhat larger volumes in watersheds where conditions continue to degrade. Water quality would continue to decline under Alternative A. Evapotranspiration consumption would be expected to increase.
Alternative B	Water resources would improve under Alternative B because watershed analysis and restoration would take place at an accelerated rate. Localized, short-term increases in erosion and sedimentation may occur immediately following vegetation treatments. Such effects would be minimized by the implementation of best management practices during the treatment process.
Alternative C	In general, long-term improvements in water quality and water resources availability for uses would occur as a result of intensive vegetation management under Alternative C. Increases in water availability (mainly springflows and baseflows) would occur in areas conducive to groundwater recharge and discharge. Water usage and water quality degradation may occur in some areas as a result of increased recreational developments. Over the long term, these effects would be combined with rapid runoff, increased flooding, and greater sediment yield encouraged by the fire suppression approach under this alternative.
Alternative D	In general, improvements in water quality and water resources availability for uses would not be extensive as a result of management under Alternative D. Small increases in water availability, primarily in limited areas conducive to groundwater recharge and discharge, would occur. Water quality improvements would occur as a result of recreation and livestock management approaches. Over the long term, however, these improvements would be overshadowed by the fire management approach under this alternative, which would ultimately encourage rapid runoff, flooding, and sediment yield.
Alternative E	Water resources would be improved on a long-term basis as individual watersheds are analyzed and treated to restore vegetation resiliency. During the short term, localized increases in erosion and sedimentation may occur immediately following treatments. The potential for these effects would be minimized by the implementation of best management practices during the treatment process. Increases in water availability (mainly springflows and baseflows) would occur in areas conducive to groundwater recharge and discharge.

Table 2 (Continued)

SOIL RESOURCES	
Goal – Maintain or improve long-term soil quality.	Current soils impacts and accelerated erosion losses primarily result from changing ecological conditions within the District. Such factors include reduction in perennial herbaceous understory and widely scattered minor surface disturbances such as those resulting from concentrations of grazing animals, off-highway vehicle use, and various other human activities. Under Alternative A, the effects of accelerated erosion on soil resources would continue their current trends.
Alternative B	Under Alternative B, the scale of vegetation treatment would increase the short-term risk for accelerated erosion in the event of extensive soil disturbance or delays in restoration success. However, the implementation of best management practices, including restoration monitoring, would minimize this impact. On a long-term basis, the erosion potential of restored areas would be diminished, soil quality would be enhanced, and activities contributing to accelerated erosion and sedimentation would be reduced over much of the District. Restoration of vegetation resilience and return to historical fire regimes would result in reduced impacts to soils when fires occur.
Alternative C	Alternative C would involve substantial increases in terms of vegetation treatment. Thus, it would involve short-term erosion risk, but long-term improvement to soil stability and quality. Short-term impacts from management of vegetation and other resources would be minimized by best management practices. Long-term reductions in accelerated erosion may be limited by the emphasis on commodity production.
Alternative D	Alternative D would involve some increases in rates of vegetation treatment, but with a limited approach and treatment scale. It also would involve limited fire suppression. Thus, Alternative D would create long-term erosion risk, limit long-term benefits to soil quality from vegetation treatments, and enhance erosion risk from major fire events. Erosion-generating human activities such as off-highway vehicle use would be substantially reduced over much of the District, but benefits from limiting these more concentrated activities would likely be offset by more widespread increases in accelerated erosion from major wildfires.
Alternative E	Over the short term, Alternative E would be expected to increase the risk of soil erosion and temporary loss of productivity on freshly treated areas. Implementation of best management practices, including restoration monitoring, would minimize these risks. Long-term reductions in erosion rates and increases in soil quality would be expected with successful widespread vegetation restoration and weed management.
VEGETATION	
Goal – Where possible, manage vegetation resources to achieve or maintain resilient ecological conditions while providing for sustainable multiple uses and options for the future across the landscape.	
Alternative A	The historic rate of treatment (largely fire rehabilitation) each year to restore desirable perennial herbaceous species and restore ecological resiliency would be increased to the extent allowed under the current fire plan. This rate, however, is not considered adequate to match the current rate of ecological deterioration, increase in woody fuel, and expansion of weedy species throughout the District, and substantial long-term effects are anticipated.
Alternative B	Treatment rates and treated areas would increase substantially beyond current levels, thereby reversing the expansion of annual invasive-dominated communities and the expansion of pinyon and juniper trees into sagebrush communities over the long term. Following restoration treatments, these areas would be more resilient to future disturbance.
Alternative C	Treatment rates and treated areas would increase substantially beyond current levels, thereby slowing and potentially reversing the expansion of annual invasive-dominated communities and the expansion of pinyon and juniper trees into sagebrush communities. Treatments would produce a narrower range of desired conditions than Alternative B, requiring more frequent future treatments. Over the long term, untreated areas would be larger than in Alternative B and would become more vulnerable to major widespread fires. Thus, the long-term impact would likely be comparable to or greater than Alternative A.
Alternative D	Passive management would result in continued proliferation of tree species into historic sagebrush-dominated sites with minimal prospects for restoration of resiliency. Increases in fuel loading in many communities plus minimal fire suppression would lead to widespread fires with the resultant burned areas being converted to the herbaceous state or an altered state dominated by annual invasive species.
Alternative E	Treatment rates and treated areas would increase substantially beyond current levels, thereby slowing and reversing the expansion of annual invasive-dominated communities and the expansion of pinyon and juniper trees into sagebrush communities. Following restoration treatments, these areas would be more resilient to future disturbance, and the presence of vegetation mosaics (as opposed to continuous expanses of sagebrush or pinyon-juniper woodland) would reduce the long-term risk of future devastating fire events.

Table 2 (Continued)

FISH AND WILDLIFE	
Aquatic Habitat and Fisheries	
Goal – In cooperation with the Nevada Department of Wildlife, manage suitable aquatic habitats to sustain nonnative fisheries and minimize conflicts between nonnative and native fish species. (Bonneville cutthroat trout are discussed under Special Status Species.) Native nongame fisheries are discussed in the Special Status Species section.	
Alternative A	Fisheries management would focus on sustaining habitats for nonnative fisheries by following Resource Advisory Council standards and guidelines. Conflicts with native species would be handled on a case-by case basis. Other programs could continue to affect habitat for nonnative fisheries as a result of sedimentation, vegetation removal, and habitat alteration due to surface disturbance. Upland areas would continue to degrade in terms of vegetation loss and erosion, which would indirectly affect riparian areas along streams and springs. Land and realty actions (e.g., rights-of-way or disposals) could involve subsequent changes in demand for either surface or groundwater resources throughout the District with resultant effects to aquatic habitat as a result of flow or water level changes.
Alternative B	Fishery management would result in maintenance and enhancement of habitat parameters involving riparian vegetation. Most of the same programs discussed in Alternative A also could affect fish habitat as a result of sedimentation, vegetation removal, or habitat alteration. Vegetation management would result in greater short-term impacts through erosion and vegetation removal as a result of increased treatment areas. On a long-term basis, these habitats would be improved along with the improvement of vegetation resilience and ecological health in the nearby riparian and upland areas. Fish habitat could be improved in Meadow Valley Wash and Clover Creek due to the ACEC designations and elimination of wild horses, respectively.
Alternative C	Management of nonnative fisheries would implement mitigation to resolve conflicts between nonnative and native fish species. Other programs would result in the same types of impacts discussed in Alternatives A and B. Increased sedimentation could affect aquatic habitat in the short term as a result of vegetation treatments and in the long term as a result of fire management. Watershed management could result in long-term improved habitat conditions in treated areas with an emphasis on recreation. Stream habitats in untreated areas would be jeopardized by increased risk of intense wildfires.
Alternative D	Habitat for nonnative fisheries would not be actively managed, which could involve the elimination of nonnative populations in some water bodies, and no new nonnative fisheries would be established. Greater impacts to nonnative fisheries habitat could occur due to uncontrolled wild horse population increases in herd management areas, increased dispersed recreation, and fire management with minimal fire suppression. Less short-term erosion would occur from vegetation treatment, but in the long term, erosion and sedimentation would be greater due to more intense fires.
Alternative E	Nonnative fisheries management would include habitat enhancement for native fish species where the two types of fisheries coexist. Vegetation treatments could result in increased short-term impacts from erosion and sedimentation immediately after treatment. These impacts would be minimized through implementation of best management practices during the treatment process. Changes in grazing management in riparian areas and restoration of vegetation resilience in nearby riparian and upland areas would improve habitat conditions over the long term.
Wildlife	
Goal – In cooperation with Nevada Department of Wildlife, provide habitat for wildlife (i.e., forage, water, cover, and space) that is of sufficient quality and quantity to support productive and diverse wildlife populations in a manner consistent with the principles of multiple-use management; to enhance biological diversity; and to sustain the ecological, economic, and social values necessary for all species.	
Alternative A	Although restoration would promote more suitable habitat conditions for wildlife species on a localized basis, long-term watershed level effects would continue to result in the conversion of vegetation cover types, increased tree density and canopy cover, decreased forest and shrub community structure, and a reduction in herbaceous cover for wildlife species. Landscape level effects would continue to result in increased habitat degradation and fragmentation, and a reduction in ecological health and vegetation resiliency.
Alternative B	On a watershed level, restoration activities would result in increased herbaceous forage, increased cover and community structure, and increased habitat quality for wildlife species. On a landscape level, restoration activities would improve wildlife habitats by reducing habitat degradation and fragmentation, promoting ecological health, and improving vegetation resiliency. Increased areas of treatment and widespread use of prescribed fires and managed natural fires would reduce the more severe impact of wildfires.
Alternative C	Implementation of this alternative would favor increased populations and expansion of high commodity wildlife species (e.g., elk). On a watershed level, wildlife conflicts would include decreased shrub cover, reduced community structure, and increased competition for habitat by sagebrush-dependent species. Landscape level effects would result in improved ecological health and vegetation resiliency despite a reduction in shrub and woodland-dominated areas. Increased potential for major widespread fires also would affect wildlife habitat over the long term.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative D	The passive management approach of this alternative coupled with minimal fire suppression would result in continued degradation of wildlife habitat with increased tree density and canopy cover and a reduction of native herbaceous understory species. These habitat changes would result in reductions of herbaceous forage, plant community structure and complexity, and overall habitat suitability for wildlife species. Increased potential for major widespread fires also would affect wildlife habitat over the long term.
Alternative E	On a watershed level, restoration activities would result in increased herbaceous forage, increased cover and vegetation structure, and increased habitat quality for wildlife species. On a landscape level, restoration activities would improve wildlife habitats by reducing habitat degradation and fragmentation, promoting ecological health, and improving vegetation resiliency. Increased areas of treatment and widespread use of managed natural fire and prescribed fires would reduce the more severe impact of wildfires.
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES	
Plant Species	
Goal – Manage public land to maintain, restore, improve, or enhance populations and habitats which lead to the recovery of federally-listed species and preclude the need for listings of proposed, candidate, state-protected, or sensitive species.	
Alternative A	A detailed analysis of potential impacts to special status plants would be completed during watershed and habitat analyses. As part of the standard operating procedures, potential mitigation measures and monitoring would be applied on a site-specific basis. Therefore, implementation of Alternative A would result in minimal short- and long-term impacts to special status plants and enable additional management emphasis for any populations identified during the watershed analysis.
Alternative B	The initiation of a systematic survey of potential habitats for the Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, development of recovery actions and a conservation strategy for potential habitat for or possible new occurrences of Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, and development of a detailed monitoring and inventorying plan for the Sunnyside green gentian would provide additional protection and recovery prospects for these species. The establishment of 18 ACECs for the protection of other resources and the land use restrictions associated with these ACECs may offer additional protection where and if special status plants occur in these areas. Therefore, implementation of Alternative B would result in additional protection for special status plants.
Alternative C	A detailed analysis of potential impacts to special status plants would be completed during watershed and habitat analyses. As part of the standard operating procedures, potential mitigation measures and monitoring would be developed on a site-specific basis. In addition, the establishment of 20 ACECs for the protection of other resources and the land use restrictions associated with these ACECs may offer additional protection where and if habitat for special status plants occur in these areas. Therefore, implementation of the Alternative C would result in additional protection for special status plants.
Alternative D	Potential habitat for Ute ladies'-tresses orchid and Sunnyside green gentian could improve in the District with the elimination of grazing and most other physical disturbances. A detailed analysis of potential impacts to special status plants would be completed during watershed and habitat analyses. The additional protection resulting from these measures, however, would be offset by the potential damage to special status plant populations resulting from increased wildfires and uncontrolled wild horse populations under this alternative.
Alternative E	A detailed analysis of potential impacts to special status plants would be completed in conjunction with each watershed and habitat analysis. As part of the standard operating procedures, potential mitigation measures and monitoring would be developed on a site-specific basis. Eighteen new ACECs would be established for the protection of other resources. The establishment of these ACECs and the land use restrictions associated with them may offer additional protection where and if special status plants occur in these areas. Therefore, implementation of Alternative E would result in additional protection for special status plants.
Aquatic Species	
Goal – Manage public land to maintain, restore, improve, or enhance populations and habitats which lead to the recovery of federally listed species and preclude the need for listings of proposed, candidate, state-protected, or sensitive species.	
Alternative A	Management for sensitive fish and invertebrate species would focus on the maintenance, mitigation, and restoration of habitat, as identified in the management and recovery plans for the species. Habitat for Pahrump poolfish in the Shoshone Ponds would be protected by fencing around the ponds. Other programs would continue to result in sedimentation and habitat alteration due to surface disturbance. Development of disposed lands could involve uses with water consumption requirements that could affect habitat through changes in flow or water level.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative B	Sensitive fish and invertebrate species would be managed through evaluations of their overall habitat conditions. Numerous resource uses could affect sensitive aquatic habitat as a result of sedimentation, vegetation removal, or habitat alteration. However, grazing impacts would be eliminated. Vegetation management could result in greater short-term impacts through erosion and sedimentation as a result of increased treatment areas. Management and restoration plans with two new ACECs would help restore habitat for fish species in Condor Canyon and Lower Meadow Valley Wash. On a long-term basis, the restoration of vegetation resilience in riparian areas and the surrounding uplands would improve habitat conditions for sensitive fish and invertebrate species.
Alternative C	Program-specific impacts would be similar to Alternative A. However, sediment-related impacts to Pahrump poolfish could be reduced by fence repair around Shoshone Ponds. Most other programs would result in the same types of impacts discussed for Alternatives A or B. Increased recreation activities could result in additional surface disturbance and sediment impacts on habitat for sensitive aquatic species.
Alternative D	Emphasis on passive management of sensitive aquatic species through exclusion of commodity uses on public lands could result in improved habitat conditions. Greater impacts to nonnative fisheries habitat would occur due to uncontrolled wild horse population use in herd management areas, increased dispersed recreation, and fire management with minimal fire suppression. Less erosion would occur from vegetation treatment, but far more would occur from widespread wildfires.
Alternative E	Sensitive fish and invertebrate species would be managed through evaluations of their overall habitat conditions. Numerous resource uses could affect sensitive aquatic habitat as a result of sedimentation, vegetation removal, or habitat alteration. Changes in grazing management in riparian areas could improve habitat conditions in the long-term period in the Lower Meadow Valley Wash and White River drainages. Vegetation management could result in greater short-term impacts through erosion and sedimentation as a result of increased treatment areas. Management and restoration plans with two new ACECs would help restore habitat for fish species in Condor Canyon and Lower Meadow Valley Wash. On a long-term basis, the restoration of vegetation resilience in riparian areas and the surrounding uplands would improve habitat conditions for sensitive fish and invertebrate species.
Wildlife Species	
Goal – Manage public land to maintain, restore, improve, or enhance populations and habitats which lead to the recovery of federally listed species and preclude the need for listings of proposed, candidate, state-protected, or sensitive species.	
Alternative A	Management of special status species would continue to occur predominantly at the scale of individual allotments and occasionally at a District-wide scale through management actions that address an immediate need or habitat niche for the maintenance, mitigation, and restoration of a single special status species on a case-by-case basis. Although restoration would promote more suitable habitat conditions for special status species on a localized basis, watershed level and landscape level effects would include continued habitat deterioration for many of the special status species.
Alternative B	Special status species would be specifically assessed, based on species-specific desired future conditions, and compared to overall habitat conditions and identification of causal factors for declines at the mid-scale. On a watershed level, restoration activities would result in higher quality forage, increased cover and vegetation structure, and increased security for special status species. On a landscape level, restoration activities to achieve desired range of conditions would improve special status species habitats by reducing habitat degradation and fragmentation, and promoting ecological health and resiliency.
Alternative C	Management of special status species would continue to address an immediate need or habitat niche for the maintenance, mitigation, and restoration of a single special status species on a case-by-case basis. On a watershed level, special status species conflicts would include decreased shrub cover, a reduction in vegetation community structure, and increased competition for habitat by sagebrush dependent species.
Alternative D	Management of special status species would emphasize a passive management approach through the exclusion of discretionary commodity uses of public lands. On a watershed level, natural habitat transitions would continue with increased canopy cover and possible increased regeneration of palatable species. On a landscape level, habitats would exhibit a reduction in overall habitat quality, ecological health, and resiliency as the result of major, widespread wildfires resulting in conversion to herbaceous communities. These habitat changes would result in a reduction of vegetation community structure and overall suitability of habitats for special status species.
Alternative E	Special status species would be specifically assessed, based on species-specific desired future conditions, and compared to overall habitat conditions and identification of causal factors for declines. On a watershed level, restoration activities would result in higher quality forage, increased cover and vegetation structure, and increased habitat quality for special status species. On a landscape level, restoration activities to achieve appropriate ranges of vegetation conditions would improve special status species habitats by reducing habitat degradation and fragmentation, and promoting ecological health and resiliency.

Table 2 (Continued)

WILD HORSES	
Goal – Maintain and manage healthy and genetically viable wild horses inside herd management areas within appropriate management levels to ensure a thriving natural ecological balance while preserving a multiple use relationship with other uses and resources.	
Alternative A	Alternative A would maintain several herd management areas that possess marginal or inadequate habitat to sustain wild horse populations at a level that would ensure genetic viability of the herd, thereby resulting in a high probability for continued conflicts with other resources, conflicts with private land owners, and occasional starvation and dehydration of wild horses.
Alternative B	Wild horse populations would be brought into balance with the available habitat resources needed to sustain genetically viable herds and prevent damage to the environment and surrounding resources. Vegetation treatments would, in the long term, enhance habitat conditions within the herd management areas to ensure the sustainability of healthy herds maintained at appropriate management levels.
Alternative C	Wild horse populations would be brought into balance with the available habitat resources needed to sustain genetically viable herds and prevent damage to the environment and surrounding resources. Alternative C, however, would likely have greater impacts and risks to wild horse populations than Alternative B over the long term due to increased potential for major wildfires.
Alternative D	The passive management approach in Alternative D for the existing 24 herd management areas and absence of fire management would result in rapid deterioration of ecological systems within these areas and likely starvation of many animals as populations increase beyond the support level of their habitat.
Alternative E	Wild horse populations would be brought into balance with the available habitat resources needed to sustain genetically viable herds and prevent damage to the environment and surrounding resources. Vegetation treatments would, in the long term, enhance habitat conditions within the herd management areas to ensure the sustainability of healthy herds maintained at appropriate management levels.
CULTURAL RESOURCES	
Goal – Identify, protect, and classify at-risk archaeological resources, significant historic properties, and cultural landscapes.	
Alternative A	Under Alternative A, cultural resources would continue to be managed for future resource use allocations. Indirect impacts associated with off-highway vehicle use, wild horses, livestock grazing, and recreational activities would continue to occur under existing management.
Alternative B	There would be a higher level of protection of cultural resources through use allocations, with 100 percent of the sites determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places allocated and managed for Conservation, Scientific, and/or Public Use, and the designation of 11 new ACECs. There also would be more protection of cultural resources than Alternative A due to the decrease in lands open to off-highway vehicle use, wild horses, and livestock grazing. The level of protection from impacts associated with fire management would be greater than Alternative A, whereas the level of protection from impacts associated with recreation activities would be lower than Alternative A.
Alternative C	Cultural resource use allocations would provide greater protection of cultural resources than Alternative A; however, there would be a lower level of protection compared to Alternative B since more sites would be allocated as Discharged from Management. The decrease of lands open to off-highway vehicle use would provide more protection of cultural resources than Alternative A, but not to the extent of Alternative B. The level of protection from impacts associated with recreation and fire management would be lower than Alternatives A and B.
Alternative D	More cultural resources would be allocated and managed for Conservation Use, which would provide a higher level of protection compared to Alternatives B and C. The level of protection of cultural resources from off-highway vehicle use, recreation, and livestock grazing would be greater than Alternatives A, B, and C. Under this alternative, fire management activities would pose a higher risk to cultural resources than Alternatives A, B, and C.
Alternative E	Management of cultural resources would be the same as Alternative B. The level of protection from recreation activities would be greater than Alternatives A, B, and C, but not to the extent of Alternative D.
PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES	
Goal – Identify and manage at-risk paleontological resources (scientific value), preserve and protect vertebrate fossils through best science methods, and promote public and scientific use of invertebrate and paleobotanical fossils.	
Alternative A	Paleontological resources would be managed for future use allocations. No registration system would be in place for trilobite collecting. The amount of unauthorized collecting of common invertebrate fossils (e.g., trilobites) and impacts associated with off-highway vehicle use would continue to increase as recreation and visitor use increases.
Alternative B	Paleontological resources would be provided a higher level of protection under this alternative because they would be allocated and managed for Scientific, Conservation, and/or Public Use. An increase in the number of acres withdrawn from mineral entry and a decrease in lands open to off-highway vehicle use would reduce impacts to paleontological resources. The no-fee registration system would increase the protection of known trilobite localities by tracking the amount of use and associated impacts.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative C	Management of paleontological resources would be the same as Alternative A, with the exception of the registration system. The fee-based registration system could reduce the number of trilobite collectors, as well as increase the protection of trilobite collecting localities and associated impacts by tracking the amount of use and associated impacts. The decrease in lands open to off-highway vehicle use would reduce impacts to paleontological resources, but not to the extent of Alternative B.
Alternative D	Management of paleontological resources would be the same as Alternative B, with the exception of trilobite collecting. Under this alternative, all trilobite collecting localities would be closed, which would provide a higher level of protection of these fossils compared to Alternatives A, B, and C. The increase in lands closed to off-highway vehicle use would reduce impacts to paleontological resources.
Alternative E	Paleontological resources would be provided a higher level of protection under this alternative because they would be allocated and managed for Scientific, Conservation, and/or Public Use. An increase in the number of acres withdrawn from mineral entry and a decrease in lands open to off-highway vehicle use would reduce impacts to paleontological resources. The no-fee registration system would increase the protection of known trilobite localities by tracking the amount of use and associated impacts.
VISUAL RESOURCES	
Goal – Manage public land actions and activities consistent with District visual resource management class objectives.	
Alternative A	Management prescriptions for Class I and II areas (approximately 1.09 million acres and 326,000 acres, respectively) would continue to preserve the scenic character of these lands. Although unclassified areas totaling approximately 3.6 million acres would be addressed on a site-specific project level, there potentially could be impacts by not having a comprehensive framework for addressing visual resources in place, in the old Egan Resource Area. Continued designation of areas open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use would result in visual impacts through surface disturbances and impacts to air quality.
Alternative B	Management prescriptions under this alternative would increase the amount of land in Visual Resource Management Class II by over 2.2 million acres. Having classifications for all lands within the District would allow for a more comprehensive framework for preserving and mitigating impacts to visual resources. Maximizing the use of prescribed fire would create short term visual impacts that would diminish in the long term after treatments are completed.
Alternative C	Management prescriptions under this alternative would increase the amount of land in Visual Resource Management Class II by approximately 2.03 million acres. Having classifications for all lands within the District would allow for a more comprehensive framework for preserving and mitigating impacts to visual resources. Utility corridor widths of three miles and the location of the Spring Valley utility corridor adjacent to Highway 893 would create greater impacts in localized areas. Suppression of wildfires would reduce impacts from fire in the short term until wildland fires became impossible to suppress, which could lead to greater long-term impacts.
Alternative D	Management prescriptions under this alternative increase the amount of land in Visual Resource Management Class II by almost 10 million acres. By identifying all areas as either Class I or II, substantial restrictions would be placed on activities that could be allowed under other resource management activities or increase the potential mitigation measures that would be required. The fact that there would be no new land use authorizations, such as rights-of-way, also would reduce impacts in the short and long term. A policy of minimal fire suppression would create short term visual impacts which would increase over the long term as catastrophic fires occur.
Alternative E	Management prescriptions under this alternative would increase the amount of land in Visual Resource Management Class II by over 2.1 million acres. Having classifications for all lands within the District would allow for a more comprehensive framework for preserving and mitigating impacts to visual resources. Maximizing the use of prescribed fire and managed natural fire would create short term visual impacts that would diminish in the long term after treatments are completed.
LANDS AND REALTY	
Goal 1 – Manage public lands in a manner that allows the retention of public land with high resource values and consolidates public land patterns to ensure effective administration and improve resource management. Make available for disposal public lands that promote community development. Utilize withdrawal actions with the least restrictive measures and minimum size necessary to accomplish the desired purpose.	
Alternative A	Approximately 28,531 acres are identified for possible disposal and 14,770 acres are identified for withdrawal. This management direction does not identify additional lands for possible disposal that would meet the objectives of BLM, benefiting communities, or the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004. There would not be a proactive effort toward identifying areas of sensitive or high resource values for withdrawal from entry.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative B	Approximately 87,834 acres would be available for possible disposal and approximately 64,156 acres would be withdrawn. Watershed analyses and subsequent restoration plans would identify lands to be retained as critical habitat for threatened or endangered species or habitat for other special status species. Withdrawing these sensitive and high resource value areas from surface and mineral entry would reduce land available for disposal as compared to Alternative A, but the removal of requirements pertaining to the retention of big game habitat, upland game habitat, and wild horse herd management areas would allow more flexibility in conducting lands and realty actions.
Alternative C	Approximately 288,744 acres would be available for possible disposal and approximately 200,243 acres would be withdrawn. The amount of land identified for potential disposal in Lincoln County exceeds the amount stipulated in the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004. Watershed analyses and subsequent restoration plans would identify lands to be retained as critical habitat for threatened or endangered species. Withdrawing these sensitive and high resource value areas from surface and mineral entry would reduce land available for disposal as compared to Alternative A, but the removal of requirements pertaining to the retention of big game habitat, upland game habitat, wild horse herd management areas, special status species habitats, wetlands and riparian areas would allow more flexibility in conducting lands and realty actions.
Alternative D	Approximately 12,790 acres would be available for possible disposal and withdrawal. Because there would be no net loss of acreage managed by the BLM, no disposals would be available to occur to promote community development, unless they were offset by acquisitions. This would limit the ability of BLM to dispose of land for community and economic development, or for other purposes. Because requests for new withdrawals, withdrawal relinquishments, or modifications would be processed on a case-by-case basis, there would not be a proactive effort toward identifying areas of sensitive or high resource values for withdrawal from entry.
Alternative E	Approximately 95,677 acres would be identified as available for possible disposal and approximately 71,999 acres would be withdrawn. Watershed analyses and subsequent restoration plans would identify lands to be retained as critical habitat for threatened or endangered species. Withdrawing these sensitive and high resource value areas from surface and mineral entry would serve to reduce the amount of land available for possible disposal as compared to Alternative A, but the removal of requirements pertaining to the retention of big game habitat, upland game habitat and wild horse herd management areas would allow more flexibility in conducting lands and realty actions.
Goal 2 – Meet public needs for use authorizations such as rights-of-way, permits, leases, and easements while avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts to other resource values.	
Alternative A	Alternative A allows flexibility in land use authorizations while encouraging co-location of facilities. By not identifying new communication sites or 0.5-mile wide corridors, the location of future rights-of-way and communication sites would not be addressed proactively and could take longer to occur by being addressed on a case-by-case basis under site-specific NEPA analyses.
Alternative B	Alternative B would allow a degree of flexibility in land use authorizations while requiring co-location of facilities to a greater extent. The proactive identification of new 0.5-mile wide corridors and communication sites would allow more flexibility and timeliness in addressing future land use authorization needs.
Alternative C	Alternative C would allow a degree of flexibility in land use authorizations while encouraging co-location of facilities. The proactive identification of new corridors and communication sites would allow more flexibility and timeliness in addressing future land use authorization needs. Presumably, the 3-mile width of designated utility corridors would allow for co-location of more rights-of-way within utility corridors.
Alternative D	Limitations on new land use authorizations, and the closure of sites within migratory bird corridors and visually sensitive sites would greatly restrict lands and realty actions in Alternative D. The possible elimination of existing communication sites would further reduce the ability of the lands and realty program to address future needs.
Alternative E	Alternative E would allow a degree of flexibility in land use authorizations while encouraging co-location of facilities. The proactive identification of new 0.5-mile-wide corridors and communication sites would allow more flexibility and timeliness in address future land use authorization needs.
RENEWABLE ENERGY	
Goal – Provide opportunities for development of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, biomass, and other alternative energy sources while minimizing adverse impacts to other resources such as wildlife and visual resources.	
Alternative A	The current management policy of evaluating and authorizing renewable energy projects on a case-by-case basis does not provide the opportunity to develop management strategies for anticipated future conditions nor a consistent approach to issuing land use authorizations. It also would not prevent the preemptive use of water resources that could be used for renewable energy, thereby potentially reducing renewable energy development.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative B	Identification of areas of high potential for renewable energy development may help to facilitate wind and solar energy development. Approximately 201,000 acres of potential wind development areas and approximately 6.77 million acres of potential solar development areas are identified. The management direction would address issues as they arise, but would not provide the opportunity to develop management strategies for anticipated future conditions. It also would not prevent the preemptive use of water resources that could be used for renewable energy, thereby potentially reducing renewable energy development.
Alternative C	Identification of areas of high potential for renewable energy development may help to facilitate wind and solar energy development. Approximately 203,000 acres of potential wind development areas and approximately 6.77 million acres of potential solar development areas are identified. The management direction would address issues as they arise, but would not provide the opportunity to develop management strategies for anticipated future conditions. It also would not prevent the preemptive use of water resources that could be used for renewable energy, thereby potentially reducing renewable energy development.
Alternative D	Under Alternative D, renewable energy development would be severely restricted through the prohibition on new land use authorizations.
Alternative E	Identification of areas of high potential for renewable energy development may help to facilitate wind and solar energy development. Approximately 205,000 acres of potential wind development areas and approximately 6.77 million acres of potential solar development areas are identified. The management direction would address issues as they arise, but would not provide the opportunity to develop management strategies for anticipated future conditions. It also would not prevent the preemptive use of water resources that could be used for renewable energy, thereby potentially reducing renewable energy development.
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AND OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE USE	
Goal – Provide and maintain suitable access to public lands. Manage off-highway vehicle use to protect resource values, promote public safety, provide off-highway vehicle opportunities where appropriate, and minimize conflict.	
Alternative A	The current management program addresses issues as they arise and on a case-by-case basis. Continuation of an open designation for the majority of the District provides for the greatest accessibility but would result in increased conflict between other resource users and off-highway vehicle users over time.
Alternative B	Alternative B would have proactive management and maintenance of the roads and trails in the District. As the existing road system is evaluated on a watershed basis, roads potentially would be closed or limited. Overall, this management could decrease access by motorized vehicles in the short term and possibly in the long term depending on whether or not roads were permanently closed. Off-highway vehicle use opportunities would be impacted through the elimination of areas open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use.
Alternative C	Alternative C would have proactive management and maintenance of the roads and trails in the District. As the existing road system is evaluated on a watershed basis, roads potentially would be closed or limited. Overall, this management could decrease access by motorized vehicles in the short term and possibly in the long term depending on whether or not roads were permanently closed. Off-highway vehicle use opportunities would be impacted through the reduction of areas open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use to approximately 32,000 acres.
Alternative D	Alternative D would substantially restrict motorized travel in the District in the short and long term. The lack of new land authorizations would reduce accessibility in the long term.
Alternative E	The elimination of cross-country off-highway vehicle use and the prioritization of road and trail designations through an updated transportation plan would have short- and long-term impacts to travel management, but would reduce off-highway vehicle use opportunities. The designation of 734,000 acres emphasizing motorized recreation on designated roads and trails within Special Recreation Management Areas would help to offset the elimination of areas open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use.
RECREATION	
Goal – Provide quality settings for developed and undeveloped recreation experiences and opportunities while protecting resources.	
Alternative A	As recreation use continues to increase over time, the limited number of recreation sites eventually would lead to increased competition for recreation opportunities. With only one special recreation management area on the District and no further creation of developed recreation sites, the ability to manage recreation as a primary objective in areas with high recreation potential would be constrained.
Alternative B	Alternative B would constitute a comprehensive program that addresses the trend of increasing recreational use as well as providing the opportunity to develop management strategies for anticipated future conditions. Nine Special Recreation Management Areas totaling approximately 2.68 million acres would be designated. Elimination of areas designated as open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use could reduce motorized recreational opportunities.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative C	Alternative C would constitute a comprehensive program that would address the trend of increasing recreational use as well as providing the opportunity to develop management strategies for anticipated future conditions. Ten Special Recreation Management Areas totaling approximately 3.31 million acres would be designated. Reduction of areas designated as open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use could reduce motorized recreational opportunities.
Alternative D	The spectrum of recreation opportunities would be greatly reduced under this alternative as there would be no Special Recreation Management Areas and all existing developed recreation sites would be eliminated.
Alternative E	Alternative E would constitute a comprehensive program that addresses the trend of increasing recreational use as well as providing the opportunity to develop management strategies for anticipated future conditions. Nine Special Recreation Management Areas totaling approximately 2.68 million acres would be designated. Elimination of areas designated as open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use could reduce motorized recreational opportunities, while designating motorized trails could enhance recreation opportunities.
LIVESTOCK GRAZING	
Goal – Manage the public lands to provide for a level of livestock grazing consistent with multiple use, sustained yield, and watershed function and health.	
Alternative A	Approximately 11.2 million acres would remain open to grazing under existing management on 235 allotments, subject to potential land sales currently authorized for possible disposal.
Alternative B	Approximately 3.6 million acres of additional grazing area affecting 189 total allotments would be closed to grazing for desert tortoise habitat, bighorn sheep habitat, and new ACECs (beyond the 212,500 acres already closed in the existing desert tortoise ACECs) resulting in long-term impacts to livestock grazing. Vegetation treatments and protection of freshly seeded areas also could temporarily affect grazing on substantial areas during the treatment process causing short-term impacts. It is expected, however, that increased forage production on previously treated areas would offset temporary reductions in these allotments.
Alternative C	Approximately 11.2 million acres would remain available for grazing in 235 existing allotments, subject to potential land sales of up to 288,744 acres. These areas would be closed to grazing when they are sold. Long-term fire impacts to grazing would be substantial. Vegetation treatments and protection of freshly seeded areas also could temporarily affect grazing on substantial areas during the treatment process, but it is expected that increased forage production on previously treated areas would offset temporary reductions in these allotments.
Alternative D	Elimination of the livestock grazing program within the District would constitute a major change in policy with attendant impacts to livestock grazing, other resource uses, and users.
Alternative E	Approximately 11.2 million acres would remain available for grazing in 235 existing allotments, subject to potential land sales of up to 114,200 acres. These areas would be closed to grazing when they are sold. Sheep and goat grazing would be affected on approximately 2.96 million acres in 49 existing allotments. Vegetation treatments and protection of freshly seeded areas also could temporarily affect grazing on substantial areas during the treatment process, but it is expected that increased forage production on previously treated areas would offset temporary reductions in those allotments.
WOODLAND AND NATIVE PLANT PRODUCTS	
Goal – Provide opportunities for traditional and non-traditional uses of vegetation products on a sustainable, multiple-use basis.	
Alternative A	Current supplies of woodland and native plant products including fuelwood, posts and poles, Christmas trees, pinyon pine nuts, various native seeds, and live plants of selected species for transplantation are adequate to meet existing demands. It is expected that availability of these woodland products would continue to exceed the expected demand.
Alternative B	Alternative B would expand the number of species permitted for use as fuelwood, posts and poles, and Christmas trees, providing a wider opportunity for personal and commercial use. The increased availability is not likely to affect the overall resource supply for any of the species involved. Availability of woodland products would exceed the expected demand. On a long-term basis, the production of woodland products from restored and resilient communities is expected to exceed current levels.
Alternative C	Alternative C would expand the number of species permitted for use as fuelwood, posts and poles, and Christmas trees and areas in which these products could be collected, thus, providing a greater opportunity for personal and commercial use. The increased availability is not likely to affect the overall resource supply for any of the species involved. Availability of woodland products would exceed the expected demand until major fires eliminated large blocks of pinyon-juniper woodlands.
Alternative D	It is highly probable that major fires at an early date under this alternative would substantially reduce the long-term supply of woodland products. However, the harvest constraints under Alternative D also would drastically reduce the demand.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative E	Alternative E would expand the number of species permitted for use as fuelwood, posts and poles, and Christmas trees, providing a greater opportunity for personal and commercial use. The increased availability is not likely to affect the overall resource supply for any of the species involved. Availability of woodland products would continue to exceed the expected demand on a long-term basis. On a long-term basis, the production of woodland products from restored and resilient communities is expected to exceed current levels.
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL EXTRACTION	
Leasable Minerals	
Goal 1 – Allow for meeting the Nation's energy needs while providing environmentally responsible production of fluid leasable minerals, and geophysical exploration for energy resources on Public Lands.	
Alternative A	The total acreage open to fluid mineral leasing would be about 90 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas are non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be less than 0.5 percent of the District.
Alternative B	The total acreage open to fluid mineral leasing would be about 89 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas are non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be less than 2 percent of the District.
Alternative C	The total acreage open to fluid mineral leasing would be about 87 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas are non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be about 3 percent of the District and are due to additional acreage closed for community land withdrawals.
Alternative D	The entire District would be closed to new leasing, but existing leases would be honored. The effects would be to preclude exploration and development (except on existing leases) and result in the loss of the resource available to the country, loss of potential lease bonus and rental revenue, loss of potential production royalties and property taxes, and other losses to related economic activity in the District. If no discoveries are made on existing leases, the leases would expire over time resulting in a total cessation of fluid mineral activities.
Alternative E	The total acreage open to fluid mineral leasing would be about 89 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas are non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed closures would be about 1 percent of the District.
Goal 2 – The development of solid leasable minerals would occur in a manner to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation.	
Alternative A	The total acreage open to solid mineral leasing would be about 90 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas are non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be about 0.5 percent of the District.
Alternative B	The total acreage open to solid mineral leasing would be about 89 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas would be non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be slightly less than 2 percent of the District.
Alternative C	The total acreage open to solid mineral leasing is about 87 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas are non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be slightly less than 4 percent of the District and is due to additional acreage closed for community land withdrawals.
Alternative D	The entire District would be closed to leasing of solid minerals and discretionary closures would comprise almost 91 percent of the District. The closures would preclude development of solid mineral resources.
Alternative E	The total acreage open to solid mineral leasing would be about 89 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas would be non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be about 1 percent of the District.
Locatable Minerals	
Goal – Allow development of locatable minerals in a manner to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation.	
Alternative A	The total acreage open to locatable minerals would be about 90 percent of the District. Most of the withdrawn areas would be non-discretionary withdrawals for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary withdrawals would be about 0.5 percent of the District.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative B	The total acreage open to locatable minerals would be about 89 percent of the District. Most of the withdrawn areas would be non-discretionary withdrawals for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary withdrawals would be slightly less than 2 percent of the District.
Alternative C	The total acreage open to locatable minerals would be about 87 percent of the District. Most of the withdrawal areas would be non-discretionary withdrawals for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary withdrawals would be slightly less than 4 percent of the District and are due to additional acreage closed for community land withdrawals.
Alternative D	The acreage open to locatable minerals would be about 37 percent of the District. Discretionary withdrawals would be about 63 percent of the district. The withdrawal of almost two-thirds (including non-discretionary withdrawals) of the District would cause severe limitations on access to potential developable locatable mineral deposits. Inability to explore and develop locatable minerals would result in loss of the resource to the country, loss of tax revenue, and other losses to related economic activity in the District.
Alternative E	The total acreage open to locatable minerals would be about 89 percent of the District. Most of the proposed withdrawal areas would be non-discretionary withdrawals for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary withdrawals would be about 1 percent of the District.
Saleable Minerals	
Goal – Allow development of saleable minerals in a manner that would prevent undue and unnecessary degradation, meet public demand, and minimize adverse impacts to other resource values.	
Alternative A	The total acreage open to saleable mineral disposal would be about 88 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas are non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be about 2.5 percent of the District.
Alternative B	The total acreage open to saleable mineral disposal would be about 84 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas would be non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be less than 7 percent of the District.
Alternative C	The total acreage open to saleable mineral disposal would be about 82 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas would be non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be about 8 percent of the District and is due to additional acreage closed for community land withdrawals.
Alternative D	The entire District would be closed to disposal of saleable minerals and discretionary closures would comprise about 91 percent of the District. The closure would preclude development of saleable mineral resources and result in the loss of the resource to the public and the loss of related economic activity.
Alternative E	The total acreage open to saleable mineral disposal would be about 84 percent of the District. Most of the closed areas would be non-discretionary closures for designated wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and not subject to the management of the Ely Field Office. Proposed discretionary closures would be slightly more than 6 percent of the District.
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT	
Goal – Manage watersheds to restore and maintain resistance and resiliency to disturbances.	
Alternative A	Treatments would not occur at a scale and rate adequate to address the magnitude and extent of ecological problems on the District. Thus, the rate of treatment under this alternative, when combined with actions proposed for vegetation, fish and wildlife, special status species, wild horses, livestock grazing, and fire management, has a low probability of achieving noticeable gains in District-wide resiliency.
Alternative B	The restoration approach of Alternative B, when combined with the actions proposed for vegetation, fish and wildlife, special status species, wild horses, livestock grazing, and fire management, addresses all of the watershed health management issues on the District with the scale of treatments needed to reverse the historic deterioration in rangeland health and restore vegetation resiliency.
Alternative C	When combined with the actions proposed for vegetation, fish and wildlife, special status species, wild horses, livestock grazing, and fire management, treatments would occur at a scale and rate that would reverse the historic deterioration in rangeland health and restore resiliency of vegetation communities. However, the narrower range of desired conditions (with greater emphasis on the herbaceous state) in this alternative as compared to Alternative B would require more effort and more frequent treatments to achieve and maintain. The higher probability for widespread fire over the long term also would necessitate greater efforts for fire suppression and rehabilitation as opposed to planned treatments.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative D	Treatments would not occur at a scale and rate, when combined with the actions proposed for vegetation, fish and wildlife, special status species, wild horses, livestock grazing, and fire management, that would reverse the historic deterioration in rangeland health and restore resiliency of vegetation communities. The long-term consequences would be more dramatic and severe than in other alternatives due to the differences in fire management and other programs.
Alternative E	The restoration approach of Alternative E, when combined with the actions proposed for vegetation, fish and wildlife, special status species, wild horse, livestock grazing, and fire management, addresses all of the watershed health management issues on the District with the scale of treatments needed to reverse the historic deterioration in rangeland health and restore vegetation resiliency.
FIRE MANAGEMENT	
Goal – Provide an appropriate management response to all wildland fires, with emphasis on firefighter and public safety, consistent with overall management objectives.	
Alternative A	Continued implementation of the existing Ely Managed Natural and Prescribed Fire Plan would allow case-by-case decisions based in part on where the fire occurs in relation to where in the District such fire would be considered beneficial or detrimental. This approach allows widespread use of managed beneficial wildfires (fire use) across the entire District, but limits the application of prescribed burning.
Alternative B	Implementation of this alternative would result in a major increase in the use of fire after watershed resiliency is improved throughout the watersheds in the District. Fire use and prescribed fire would be implemented year-round to meet resource objectives in accordance with the revised Ely Fire Management Plan (BLM 2004a). An increase in mechanical, biological, and herbicide use may be necessary to meet management goals prior to expanding the use of fire.
Alternative C	Full suppression of fires within the District would be practical only on a short-term basis. Over the long term, the attempts at full suppression would probably lead to catastrophic widespread fires resulting in long-term ecological damage and increased risk to human safety and property.
Alternative D	Buildup of fuels would occur throughout the District and eventually lead to catastrophic fires, resulting in long-term ecological damage and increased risk to human safety and property. It is expected that such fires would occur earlier in time with this alternative than with Alternative C.
Alternative E	Implementation of this alternative would result in a major increase in the use of fire after watershed resiliency is improved throughout the watersheds in the District. Fire use and prescribed fire would be implemented year-round to meet resource objectives in accordance with the revised Ely Fire Management Plan (BLM 2004a). An increase in herbicide use also may be necessary to meet management goals prior to expanding the use of fire.
NOXIOUS AND INVASIVE WEED MANAGEMENT	
Goal – Prevent the introduction and spread of noxious and invasive weeds. Control or eradicate existing populations.	
Alternative A	Weed control efforts historically have focused primarily on toxic and noxious weed species with less attention devoted toward the spread of annual invasive species such as cheatgrass, which provide usable forage during a short grazing season each spring. Current management includes emphasis on slowing and reversing the spread of these invasive species through application of integrated pest management methods. Under this alternative, the rate of spread of noxious and invasive weeds would increase in both the short and long term.
Alternative B	Alternative B would be similar to Alternative A in terms of weed management, but the substantial increase in vegetation treatments under this alternative would temporarily increase the risk of weed invasion and expansion in areas disturbed by treatment but reduce the vulnerability of these same areas on a long-term basis. Therefore, this alternative would reduce the rate of spread of noxious and invasive weeds on a long-term basis.
Alternative C	The level of vegetation treatments involved in Alternative C would be approximately the same as Alternative B. This alternative, like Alternative B, would reduce the long-term impacts of noxious and invasive weeds through vegetation treatments, but this would likely be offset by the increased probability of weed establishment and spread following major wildfire events.
Alternative D	Weed management would involve exclusion of some groups of herbicides. This would effectively reduce the capability to control several weed species and increase impacts associated with noxious and invasive weeds. The combination of weed management actions with other program actions under this alternative would not reduce the rate of spread of noxious and invasive weeds in the long term.
Alternative E	Alternative E involves a combination of weed management similar to Alternative A plus vegetation treatments at a substantially greater scale than Alternative A to restore vegetation resiliency. On a long-term basis, this is expected to result in a substantial reduction in the risk of establishment and spread of noxious and invasive species.
SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS	
Goal – Evaluate areas of interest for special designation and appropriately manage those areas that meet necessary requirements.	
Alternative A	Approximately 212,500 acres would retain their designation as three ACECs.
Alternative B	Approximately 353,900 acres would be designated as three existing and 18 new ACECs.
Alternative C	Approximately 348,400 acres would be designated as three existing and 20 new ACECs.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative D	All special designations would be eliminated, but with minimal activity in other management programs, no impacts to the sensitive resources are anticipated from other uses.
Alternative E	Approximately 347,900 acres would be designated as three existing and 18 new ACECs.
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS	
Goal – No program-specific goals have been identified for economic and social conditions or health and safety.	
Economic Conditions	
Alternative A	Alternative A would result in minor, long-term economic impacts (jobs, income, locally derived taxes, etc.) across the Ely District. Such impacts would intensify over time, accruing across the entire District, though not necessarily uniformly. The adverse economic impacts in Lincoln County would be masked by major, long-term economic growth associated with the Lincoln County Land Act. The Lincoln County Land Act impacts are unrelated to the RMP and would be undifferentiated across alternatives. Federal payments in lieu of taxes and grazing fees received by White Pine County would decline by as much as \$86,000 annually, but increase in Lincoln County. Changes in payments in lieu of taxes and grazing fees would be minor relative to the total budgets of the affected local governments.
Alternative B	Alternative B would result in minor, long-term enhancements of the local economy, e.g., 255 to 260 jobs, across the Ely District due to the added restoration funding, enhanced woodland commodity availability, and increases in big-game hunting. Gains would be tempered by long-term decreases in farm/ranch income from allotment closures in the Mojave Desert and bighorn sheep habitat. Lincoln County would see major, long-term economic growth triggered by the Lincoln County Land Act. Annual payments in lieu of taxes to White Pine County would be lower than at the present, but higher than under Alternative A. Payments in lieu of taxes would increase in Lincoln County. RMP-related impacts on local fiscal conditions would be minor and long-term relative to local budgets.
Alternative C	Alternative C would promote increased organized and developed recreation activity in the District, compared to Alternative A, and the development of tourism and recreation-oriented facilities by both the public and private sectors. Higher levels of organized use, in the form of truck and motorcycle events, would augment continued OHV use accommodated by a management emphasis to designate roads and trails for such use. The combined organized and dispersed recreation use would stimulate recreation spending in the region, providing added stimulus to local retail, eating and drinking, lodging and other such establishments, which would increase the number of local jobs in the affected industries.
Alternative D	Alternative D would result in major, long-term economic impacts, due to substantial reductions in ranch income, wildland fire suppression, and withdrawals of lands open for mineral and energy-related development. The latter could result in foregone short-term economic benefits associated with utility construction projects precluded by the lack of utility corridors. The Lincoln County economy would experience major, long-term economic growth associated with development of lands sold under the Lincoln County Land Act. Annual payments in lieu of taxes to White Pine County would be lower than at the present, but comparable to those under Alternative A. The provision for no net loss of public lands may delay or limit land disposal actions that would otherwise foster community and economic development, thereby impacting local fiscal budgets.
Alternative E	Alternative E would result in minor, long-term enhancements of the local economy, e.g., 255 to 260 jobs, across the Ely District due to the added restoration funding, stewardship contracting, increased woodland commodity production, and developed and organized recreation. Ranch income would be adversely impacted over the short term, but would increase over the long term. Annual payments in lieu of taxes to White Pine County would be lower than at the present, but would increase in Lincoln County. RMP-related impacts on local fiscal conditions would be minor and long term relative to local budgets.
Social Conditions	
Alternative A	Long-term moderate to major population declines in White Pine County and moderate to major population increases in Lincoln County are projected under Alternative A. Subsequently, housing demand and prices would fall in White Pine County, while increasing in Lincoln County. Residential development in Lincoln County would increase concerns about wildland fire risks. Continuation of current management practices would be widely perceived as unresponsive to public concerns regarding declining ecological health in the Great Basin and the implications for public land use.
Alternative B	Alternative B would increase regional population by 510 to 560 residents during restoration. Generally perceived as beneficial, the gains would be relatively more concentrated around Ely. By accelerating the pace of restoration and improved ecological health, Alternative B would contribute to potential long-term population growth over and above that under Alternative A. Higher population would bolster housing markets in White Pine County. Many would view the increased restoration funding levels favorably, but would be concerned about short-term impacts on lifestyles and personal use, and future management decisions as rangeland health standards are achieved. Alternative B may hold relatively stronger appeal to those favoring resource protection and restoration.

Table 2 (Continued)

Alternative C	Alternative C would increase regional population by 190 to 210 residents during restoration. The gains and corresponding benefits on local housing markets would be concentrated around Ely. Indirect benefits from long-term commodity use, stewardship contracting, and expanded options for possible land disposal would provide minor, long-term social benefits. The management emphasis for Alternative C may hold less appeal to stakeholders desiring stronger resource protection, sportsmen, and those favoring commercial uses of woodland and native plant products than to interests promoting motorized recreation.
Alternative D	Alternative D would have little impact on regional population or housing markets, as compared to Alternative A. Alternative D carries forward several elements of Alternative A, but eliminates livestock grazing and places additional constraints on possible land disposal, mineral entry, and energy development that are viewed by residents as imperative to community and economic viability. Consequently, this alternative would hold relatively less appeal for area residents and local government officials than for those stakeholders whose specific areas of concern serve as the foundation for this alternative.
Alternative E	Alternative E would result in minor regional population increases of 510 to 560 residents during restoration, with corresponding long-term impacts on local housing markets. The gains would be relatively more concentrated around Ely. Additional social benefits may be realized from stewardship contracting, the fuels management/wildland fire risk reduction, and potential for developed recreation associated with possible land disposal. This alternative may hold relatively less appeal for those desiring maximum emphasis on resource protection and rangeland health restoration.
AMERICAN INDIAN ISSUES	
No specific impacts are compared. See Section 4.25 to identify specific issues and the sections in which they are addressed.	
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	
Goal – No program specific goals have been identified for environmental justice.	
Alternative A	No disproportionate adverse impacts to low-income populations were identified in conjunction with the resource programs, objectives, or management direction associated with Alternative A.
Alternative B	No disproportionate adverse impacts to low-income populations were identified in conjunction with the resource programs, objectives, or management direction associated with Alternative B.
Alternative C	No disproportionate adverse impacts to low-income populations were identified in conjunction with the resource programs, objectives, or management direction associated with Alternative C.
Alternative D	No disproportionate adverse impacts to low-income populations were identified in conjunction with the resource programs, objectives, or management direction associated with Alternative D.
Alternative E	No disproportionate adverse impacts to low-income populations were identified in conjunction with the resource programs, objectives, or management direction associated with Alternative E.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	
Goal – The goal of the Health and Safety program is to ensure that management decisions are protective of life and property.	
Alternative A	There would be a slight increase of risk to public health and safety because of an increased wildfire risk.
Alternative B	There would be a decrease of risk to public health and safety because of decreased wildfire risk.
Alternative C	There would be an increase of risk to public health and safety because of increased wildfire risk.
Alternative D	There would be a great increase of risk to public safety because of the increased wildfire risk and the potential for large destructive fires.
Alternative E	There would be a decrease of risk to public health and safety because of the decreased wildfire risk.

Table 3
Cumulative Impacts of the Proposed Action

CLIMATE AND AIR QUALITY
Cumulative impacts include those caused by sources and activities associated directly with Alternative E and those caused by interrelated projects that have occurred historically, projects that are currently underway, and those that might reasonably occur in the future. Air resources in the District are mainly affected by mining and vegetation management/fire management practices. Regulatory decisions related to industrial development and mining would prevent significant air quality degradation by applying mitigation measures on a case-by-case basis. Two potential electrical generating power projects would affect air quality in the region if constructed. Permitting requirements of the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would require modern control technology to limit emissions and impacts from these potential sources. Fire management treatments would include in-depth planning and analysis of potential incident and cumulative air quality impacts to reduce emissions associated with fires. Projected cumulative impacts are of such a nature that the District should be able to meet all applicable local, state, Tribal, and National Ambient Air Quality Standards under the Clean Air Act (as amended), and prevent significant deterioration of air quality within the Ely District from all direct and authorized actions.
WATER RESOURCES
Cumulative impacts of Alternative E would be minimized over the long term by extensive vegetation management and administration of other land uses that would consider a balanced ecosystem approach. Salinity inputs to the Colorado River system would be reduced over time. Short-term increases in runoff, soil erosion, and related sedimentation may occur on those areas where vegetation treatments occur. Interrelated projects would have the potential to create impacts on both surface and groundwater resources through additional erosion and sedimentation as a result of land disturbance, further consumption of available water resources, and additional releases of undesirable water quality constituents (e.g., industrial chemicals, treated domestic effluent) into receiving waters. The enhanced vegetation resiliency resulting from Alternative E should help offset the effects of the interrelated projects on water resources.
SOIL RESOURCES
Cumulative impacts of Alternative E and interrelated projects would involve a short-term increase of erosion and sedimentation, with accompanying reduction in soil productivity, when the activities are initially undertaken. Extensive vegetation treatment on the District would, in time, result in substantial reduction of erosion and sedimentation. Similarly, soil productivity would increase over the long term as a result of vegetation treatments. Impacts from interrelated project development within the District would result in permanent removal or alteration of soil resources in specific areas (such as project footprints or some riparian/wetland areas). Regulatory programs (including permit approval and monitoring processes), and the implementation of best management practices and mitigation measures, would reduce the degree of overall erosion and sedimentation impacts. Soil productivity would be lost in the comparatively smaller areas affected by interrelated projects, but would improve over widespread areas with successful vegetation restoration.
VEGETATION
The actions related to Alternative E would enhance vegetation resiliency on a long-term basis, although some elements of the alternative would contribute to temporary loss of vegetation and potential spread of invasive species. Most of the interrelated projects have produced or would result in the removal of native vegetation and potential spread of invasive species, either through physical disturbance or alteration of vegetation communities. The enhanced vegetation resiliency resulting from Alternative E should offset a large portion of the past and potential future disturbance effects from interrelated projects.
FISH AND WILDLIFE
Aquatic Habitat and Fisheries
The cumulative effects of interrelated projects in combination with program-specific management under Alternative E would generally improve maintenance and quality of fish habitat in the long term as restoration efforts improve both upland and riparian habitat conditions. This habitat improvement would tend to offset continued habitat losses and damage resulting from various interrelated projects including potential groundwater withdrawal.
Wildlife
The actions related to Alternative E would improve wildlife habitat conditions on the watershed level and landscape level in the short and long term. However, the interrelated projects either have produced or would result in direct wildlife mortality, displacement of wildlife, habitat loss or alteration, and increased habitat fragmentation. The habitat improvement resulting from the vegetation restoration treatments should offset a large portion of the past and potential future habitat losses and damage resulting from interrelated projects.

Table 3 (Continued)

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES	
Plant Species	The impacts related to Alternative E would have minimal effect on the Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, Sunnyside green gentian, and other special status plants on an overall basis. Most of the interrelated projects have produced or would produce minimal effects to special status plants, either through physical disturbance or alteration of vegetation communities. The improved knowledge base and potential mitigation measures related to Alternative E should offset a large portion of the past and potential future adverse effects from interrelated projects.
Aquatic Species	In spite of a management emphasis in Alternative E on protecting habitat for sensitive aquatic species, surface disturbance activities could result in localized water quality changes due to sedimentation or runoff contaminants, and habitat alteration or loss. Several programs such as vegetation restoration and weed management (i.e., tamarisk removal) could increase stream flows and spring discharges. Several of the interrelated projects could result in changes to surface water quantity in various streams or springs (e.g., groundwater withdrawal). In the long term, vegetation restoration could reduce stream flows originating from surface runoff, but could locally increase stream base flows and spring discharges. Other interrelated actions could combine with these water quantity changes to affect habitat for sensitive species. The cumulative effects of interrelated projects in combination with program-specific management under Alternative E would result in impacts on sensitive fish species habitat due to surface disturbance in watersheds, but this would be balanced by an increased rate of maintenance and restoration of habitat for sensitive fish species.
Wildlife Species	The impacts related to Alternative E would improve special status species habitat conditions on the watershed level and landscape level in the long term. However, the interrelated projects either have produced or would continue to result in direct special status species mortality, displacement of individuals, habitat loss or alteration, and increased habitat fragmentation. The special status species habitat improvement resulting from Alternative E should offset a large portion of the past and potential future habitat losses and damage resulting from interrelated projects.
WILD HORSES	The impacts related to Alternative E generally would improve habitat for wild horse herds on a long-term basis while many of the potential impacts associated with interrelated projects would reduce habitat, but typically to a lesser degree. Thus, the overall cumulative effects would be general improvement in the habitat necessary for long-term herd health and viability.
CULTURAL RESOURCES	There would be a high level of protection of cultural resources under Alternative E (overall decrease in lands available to off-highway vehicle use and livestock/wild horse grazing and the designation of ACECs to protect cultural resources) offsetting the expected increase in visitor and recreation use in the District. Thus, the overall cumulative effects would be negligible.
PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES	There would be a high level of protection of paleontological resources under Alternative E (overall decrease in lands available to off-highway vehicle use and mineral development, and a registration system for fossil collecting) offsetting the expected increase in visitor and recreation use in the District. Thus, the overall cumulative effects would be negligible.
VISUAL RESOURCES	Under Alternative E, impacts to visual resources would be minimal, those impacts mainly being from surface disturbances associated with the vegetation treatments, and the reduction in surface disturbances associated with the elimination of cross-country off-highway vehicle use and the co-location of utility rights-of-way and communication sites. Some interrelated projects would result in surface disturbances, increased air emissions, and local visual impacts.
LANDS AND REALTY	Cumulative impacts to the management of lands and realty would be relatively minor and would occur as a result of new avoidance and exclusion areas and management direction encouraging co-location of utility rights-of-way and communication sites. Interrelated projects could increase pressure for development and create a higher demand for developable lands in the planning area.
RENEWABLE ENERGY	Interrelated power plant and transmission line projects could create better access to electrical transmission lines. Interrelated power plants, water development, and residential development projects could impact renewable energy development through the use of water that could otherwise be used for development of

Table 3 (Continued)

concentrated solar power.
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AND OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE USE
The elimination of cross-country off-highway vehicle use and the prioritization of road and trail designations through an updated transportation plan would have short and long term impacts to travel management, but would reduce off-highway vehicle use opportunities. The designation of 734,000 acres emphasizing motorized recreation on designated roads and trails within Special Recreation Management Areas would help to offset the elimination of areas open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use. The interrelated projects would have minimal effects on transportation planning and road and truck designations.
RECREATION
Impacts to recreation under Alternative E include a reduction of areas offering motorized recreation opportunities, an increase in special recreation management areas, and a potential increase in wildlife, creating more viewing and hunting opportunities. While there would be less areas offering motorized recreation opportunities, the provision of areas specifically maintained for off-highway vehicles would help to offset this reduction. Interrelated projects would have a mixed impact on recreation. Rebuilding of dams and expansion of lakes could reduce recreation opportunities in the short term, while creating an overall increase in recreation opportunities in the long term. Increased population in the district and adjacent areas would lead to an increase in demand for recreational opportunities.
LIVESTOCK GRAZING
The impacts of Alternative E and interrelated projects to livestock grazing would reduce forage for livestock in the short-term on any given treatment area during vegetation treatment activities and generally increase forage over the long-term as treated vegetation communities reach their potential productivity. Interrelated projects typically would reduce the area available for grazing. Overall the cumulative effects would enhance available forage on a long-term basis as the increasing forage productivity on treated areas offsets and later exceeds future incremental reductions associated with interrelated projects.
WOODLAND AND NATIVE PLANT PRODUCTS
The impacts associated with Alternative E and interrelated projects would generally result in reduced acreage of dense, overmature woodlands, increased diversity of age classes within most woodland sites, healthier and more resilient overall woodland communities, and comparable or potentially increased annual production of woodland products on a sustained yield basis.
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL EXTRACTION
Impacts of Alternative E and certain interrelated projects on mineral exploration and development could be restrictive, with potential impacts coming primarily from interrelated projects involving endangered species recovery and protection.
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT
Most of the interrelated projects have individually localized, but cumulatively widespread, effects on ecological health and watershed function, depending on the nature and areal extent of disturbances involved. On a short-term basis, Alternative E would tend to be additive to such impacts, but on a long-term basis, the vegetation improvement associated with the treatments should more than offset the effects of the interrelated projects. This expectation of improved conditions, however, could be delayed or reduced by extended periods of drought, major insect infestations, or disease outbreaks. In other cases, insects and disease could help in meeting management goals.
FIRE MANAGEMENT
The cumulative impacts on fire management involve the effects of Alternative E (increased use of prescribed fires to achieve desired range of conditions for vegetation and greater flexibility in responding to accidental or natural ignitions) offsetting the increased frequency of accidental ignitions expected from the escalating use of the planning area for such activities as recreation, industrial development, and off-highway vehicle use.
NOXIOUS AND INVASIVE WEED MANAGEMENT
Alternative E would work to control the spread and reduce the occurrence of invasive and noxious weed species in the District. At this time, however, it is undetermined whether the rate of vegetation treatment and improvement toward the desired range of conditions would be adequate to offset the recently increasing rate of introduction and spread of invasive and noxious species, some of which is associated with interrelated past, present, and future projects.
SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS
Impacts to special designations under Alternative E would be an increase in areas managed as ACECs, providing more effective protection of resources, and the creation of new back-country byways. Road development and improvements for interrelated projects could have impacts to desert tortoise populations in the southeastern portion of the District, degrading desert tortoise habitat and potentially increasing desert tortoise mortality through collisions with vehicles.

Table 3 (Continued)

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS
Several of the interrelated projects pose a potential for generating significant impacts on economic and social conditions in portions of, or across much of the Ely District. The greatest likelihood for significant impacts arises in the context of potential long-term changes associated with major future land development activities in southern Lincoln County, the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Repository, water development and pipeline proposals seeking changes in the location and type of use of surface and groundwater resources in the region, and the White Pine Energy Station. The agency preferred alternative, and any of the alternatives thereto, would incrementally contribute to those impacts in a cumulative sense, if for no other reason than that several of them would directly or incidentally involve public lands, for utility corridors, for instance. Although the duration, timing, and extent of the overall cumulative effects is indeterminate based on current information, the potential for significant impacts, including short-term impacts, increases if development of two or more of the interrelated projects were to occur concurrently.
SOCIAL CONDITIONS
See economic conditions.
AMERICAN INDIAN ISSUES
Cumulative impacts, if present, are identified in the corresponding topic areas of Section 4.28.
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
Following the definition for cumulative impacts presented at the beginning of this section, an impact must result from BLM management direction before a cumulative impact will occur. Since there are no environmental justice issues, no cumulative impacts would occur.
HEALTH AND SAFETY
Alternative E would reduce the long term risk of large-scale fires and the risk of personal injuries and destruction of personal property associated with wildfires, largely offsetting the anticipated increases in wildfire risk arising from various interrelated projects.

RMP Management Focus

The restoration and maintenance of healthy ecological systems within watersheds is a primary focus for the future management of the Ely District. Healthy ecological systems are geographically diverse and change over time. They are compatible with soil potential and are resilient to disturbance.

Resources and resource uses will be managed to restore or maintain ecological health. Certain resource management changes and active treatments may need to be implemented, in portions of watersheds, to accomplish this objective. Adaptive management will be pursued to avoid deteriorating conditions favoring invasive plants and catastrophic fires. Any projects will be implemented so as to result in a mosaic of vegetation within a watershed.

In the long term, natural disturbance (such as drought or fire) will occur and fewer treatments will be needed to maintain ecological health. The result will be a variety of vegetation phases within a watershed, which will provide diverse, healthy conditions for future generations.

